



THE INDEPENDENT

No 3366

MONDAY 4 AUGUST 1997

WEATHER: Warm, some rain

(R 45p) 40p

THE DEBORAH ROSS INTERVIEW
THE LOST WORD OF KENNETH CLARKE

MEDIA+
STARS WITH ADS IN THEIR EYES

ARTS
WHY JOHN CUSACK IS NOT TOM CRUISE

MoD scuppers rescue plan for Britannia

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Ministry of Defence last night moved to torpedo a plan to refit the 43-year-old royal yacht *Britannia* with a £50m refit financed by private investment and a lease-back scheme.

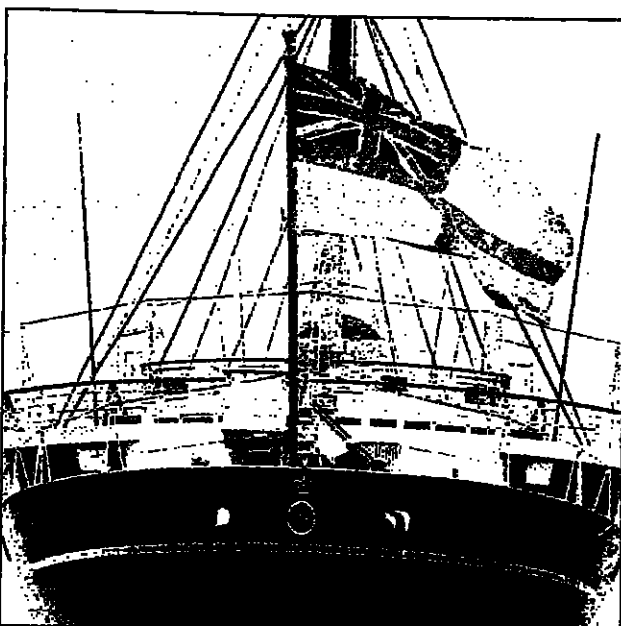
The scheme to save the royal yacht was said to have been negotiated by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, to raise private finance for the refit. The vessel could then be hired back to the Government or the Queen for special occasions, such as exhibitions or receptions.

Tony Blair's ministers now face an embarrassing dilemma over *Britannia*. It is seen as an asset for Britain's export drive abroad and the lease-back scheme would enable the Government to use the vessel to fly the flag. But the MoD believes it would be better to build a new ship with private finance than to allow the old *Britannia* to run on for another generation.

The MoD will warn Mr Blair next month that he will risk breaching his election pledge, that not a penny of taxpayers' money will be spent on the ship, if he agrees to refit the royal yacht because its running costs - estimated at £5m a year - could still fall on the MoD.

The Chancellor was reported to have stepped in to rescue the yacht after the MoD said that it would be decommissioned in December.

A Treasury spokesman said: "Private-sector proposals have been put to us and we are looking at them very closely. Private businesses see quite a big commercial opportunity in re-



Britannia: facing uncertain future Photograph: Tom Pilsten

fitting *Britannia*; they see it as a way of securing export potential. We are keen to see a positive outcome."

But the MoD hit back yesterday, making it clear that it was highly unlikely to support the plan because refitting the vessel's out-dated engines would not answer the problem of its high running costs.

George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence, was said by senior Whitehall sources to be furious about a spate of reports at the weekend suggesting ministers were likely to reprieve the vessel in a lease-back arrangement for the Queen.

Ministers are heading for a showdown over the refit plan early next month with Peter

Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio, who yesterday appeared to give support to the idea of allowing the royal yacht to continue in service for another 20 years.

Stressing that ministers had not explored all the options, he said: "The one that's reported today is the one that's receiving the greatest consideration. Ministers are working very energetically in trying to devise a way in which we can both keep the yacht and refurbish it properly so that it's good for the Royal Family and great for Britain too, but using private finance on a lease-back arrangement."

Mr Mandelson reaffirmed Tony Blair's election commitment not to spend taxpayers'

money on the royal yacht. But the MoD is lined up to warn that refitting the vessel could lead to the running costs falling on the defence budget, which officials think would breach the election pledge.

The MoD is leading the review of the options for replacing *Britannia*, but will not allow it to be a burden on the defence budget any more. Defence ministers are adamant that they are not going to foot the bill for the running costs for the royal yacht, if it is refitted.

"We don't know where this has come from, but it is simply not true," said a Whitehall source. "The Defence Secretary is not very happy with it. The question of the refit is being looked at as one of the options but it is only one of many."

"Refitting an old ship is never a very satisfactory exercise. You could end up with new engines, but a potentially leaking hull. There is talk of it having 'hi-tech' equipment to cut down the running costs, but that is nonsense."

The MoD has been fighting to remove the yacht from its budget since the Falklands War when its defence role as an ambulance ship was exposed as a sham. The MoD wanted to scrap *Britannia* because of its heavy running costs. Its out-dated engines require an oiler ship to travel with it, and it requires heavy over-manning by naval standards.

England risk the youngest for a half century



Big hit: Ben Hollis is set to become England's youngest Test cricketer for 48 years Photograph: Robert Hallam

Derek Pringle
Cricket Correspondent

England's cricket selectors, not normally noted for their concessions to youth, yesterday gambled their Ashes hopes by selecting Ben Hollis, Surrey's 19-year-old all-rounder, in the 13-man squad to play against Australia on Thursday. If Hollis makes the final 11 at Trent Bridge, he will become England's youngest Test cricketer since 1949, when the 18-year-old Brian Close played against New Zealand, and the

second youngest player selected ever.

His inclusion is a daring risk, hastened by England's parlous situation in the Ashes series. With two Tests to play, they trail Australia, who only need to draw the fifth Test to retain the Ashes, by two matches to one.

Quite simply England need attitude and Hollis, whose brother Adam is also in the squad, has plenty. The brothers, born in Australia, moved during the Eighties when their father, an engineer, was posted to England.

But although a naturalised pom, Hollis is the younger is no stranger to the visiting Australians, who will have good cause to remember his swash-buckling innings of 63 at Lord's during the final one-day international in May. It won England the game.

"I have no divided loyalties - I definitely feel British," Ben said. "I can't help it that I was born in Australia. I consider myself 100 per cent English, but it is an added incentive that I will make my debut against Australia, who are the unofficial world champions."

Another controlled display, this time against Kent in the Benson and Hedges Cup final, merely confirmed the suspicions that here was a brilliant, uninhibited young talent.

It is largely thanks to the unflappable manner of those efforts, that Hollis, despite his inexperience, has been drafted in. With the Australians in ruthless form, however, only time will tell if that decision has been a premature one.

Full squad, Sport section

Blair's first reshuffle targets

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Thriving young ministers are speculating about the timing of Tony Blair's first ministerial reshuffle - fewer than 100 days after the new Prime Minister formed his first government.

Among the most vulnerable Cabinet targets for the axe are: Gavin Strang, transport minister; David Clark, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

All three have suffered humiliating setbacks over the last month. Mr Strang committed the sin of accepting the advice of civil servants on a road programme package, which would have given the green light to a number of "dirty dozen" schemes, including the controversial Salisbury by-pass and a

widening of the M25 west of London.

Having already decided to slam the brakes on the powerful lobby John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, announced that the M25 plan had been stalled, and the Salisbury by-pass was rejected.

Dr Clark promised to deliver a White Paper on Freedom of Information before the end of this month, but he was then given a savage dressing down by Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, in a Cabinet committee on future legislation, and was virtually ordered to go back to the drawing board.

The White Paper is not now expected until the autumn, and there are strong Whitehall doubts as to whether Dr Clark will be in post when the draft

Labour's 100 days: who's up, who's down, page 4

Bill is unveiled early next year. Mr Smith's problems started with his bungling of the Lottery "fatcats" row, when he appeared to be second-guessed by No10, and culminated in the Prime Minister's decision to hand over the controversial Millennium Dome project to Peter Mandelson, Mr Blair's hatchet-man.

A senior Government source has told *The Independent* that there is no immediate question of Mr Blair making changes to his ministerial team. They will all be allowed to have their holidays in peace.

But the Whitehall speculation is that changes will be needed by the new year, as the Government's political and parliamentary programme begins to build up.

UK ministers will take over the presidency of the European Union for the first six months of next year: one of the most fundamental spending reviews ever undertaken will be reaching crunch point by next June; and devolution legislation and the implementation of a national minimum wage are just two of the controversial measures that will go before Parliament over the next 12 months.

Recent attacks from Tony Benn and Roy Hattersley, who has not yet taken up his peerage, could also mark the first significant crack in Labour's remarkable discipline, and if backbench sniping builds up,

that will add further spice to the Labour cauldron.

It is accepted at Westminster that many members of the Blair team have done very well since May. Mo Mowlam, Northern Ireland, Jack Cunningham, at Agriculture, Alistair Darling, at the Treasury, and Ann Taylor, Leader of the House, have delivered bonus success for Mr Blair, while Mr Prescott, Gordon Brown, Robin Cook, Jack Straw and David Blunkett have all proved their ability to get on with a difficult job.

Speculation that Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, is impatient for Cabinet rank could yet prove wide of the mark. He has gathered phenomenal influence on Cabinet committees - where it takes a brave soul to contradict a man thought to be the eyes, ears and voice of the Prime Minister.

RAC tepid on new drink-drive limit

Steve Boggan

Proposals to reduce the drink-drive limit to a level equivalent to a single pint of beer were given a lukewarm reception yesterday from an unexpected quarter - the RAC.

In line with an election promise, Labour is conducting a review of drinking and driving policy.

The Department of Transport confirmed yesterday that it was considering a new 80mg blood-alcohol limit, which would be equivalent to a single pint of beer.

It is being considered whether the present blood-alcohol level might be lowered. But the RAC said that an option to slash the permitted level by almost half would make little difference to safety on the road.

Although no firm decisions on levels or timescales for their introduction have been made, the police and the British Medical Association have welcomed the review. The RAC, however, is not enthusiastic.

the RAC. "All the research shows that serious offenders aren't a little bit over the limit; they're three or four times over. These kinds of people don't have a problem with drinking, they have a problem with driving, and they're unlikely to be deterred by lower limits."

Instead of lowering limits or increasing penalties, the RAC would like the Government to extend a voluntary scheme introduced two years ago whereby offenders were given lower sentences in return for attending alcohol rehabilitation classes. "The RAC is not against the idea of alcohol on their minds, but it is against the idea of alcohol on their lips," said a spokesman.

caused by drinking and driving.

"Rates of re-offending on these courses have been cut by about 50 per cent," said Mr King. "If money were provided to make these courses compulsory, we believe we would see a real reduction in the problem."

The British Medical Association said that it would support a cut to 50mg. "This is based on scientific evidence indicating that at about that level the dangers to drivers and road users begins to increase," a spokesman said.

In Australia, where the level was recently reduced to 50mg, there has been a 12 per cent cut in alcohol-related accidents.



QUICKLY
M16's HK inquiry
Critics of Chris Patten's term as Governor of Hong Kong were said last night to be behind an M16 inquiry into claims that he breached the Official Secrets Act by leaking details of a secret deal between London and Peking. Page 6

New York plot mystery
As investigators from the FBI and the New York Police Department continued their inquiries into what is officially said to have been a narrowly averted terrorist attack on the New York subway, the circumstances of the case seemed to be growing murkier by the day. Page 8

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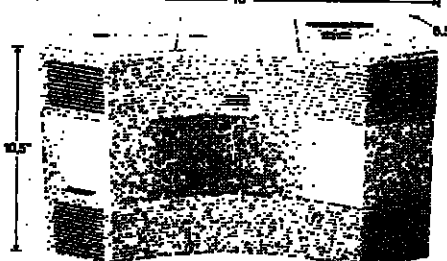
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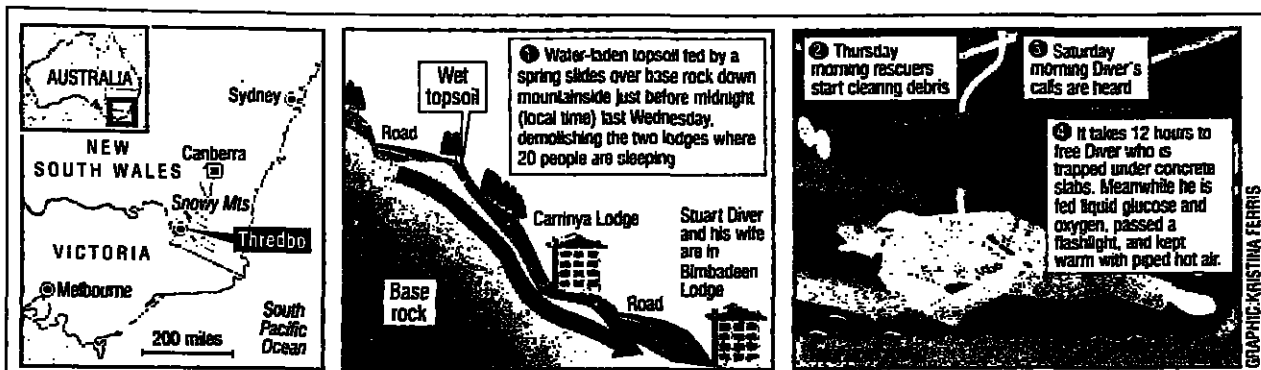
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Whizz
a happy

'Water ran down the hill and filled his cocoon. He had only an inch or two above his nose and he would lift his head against the concrete slab and suck in the air. The fact that this young fellow is super fit is probably the main reason he survived'



Robert Milliken
Sydney

Stuart Diver, the Australian ski instructor rescued after three days trapped under landslide rubble where his wife died beside him, has given a graphic account of the survival that has stunned doctors, his rescuers and ordinary Australians alike.

Mr Diver, 27, was in hospital in Canberra, the Australian capital, last night recovering from frostbite to his feet, cuts to his body, dehydration and tiredness, the sum total of his ailments from an ordeal that doctors said would have killed almost anyone else.

From his hospital bed yesterday, Mr Diver recorded a television message of thanks to

his rescuers. "I'd just like to thank everyone who was involved in my rescue, the fire brigade, and all the rescue services along with the medical teams at Thredbo and here in Canberra and all the people who prayed for me and gave me so much support over the last couple of days," he said.

"It's been overwhelming and I don't think I'd have made it through without the involvement of all those people."

"His chances of survival were one in a million," said Richard Morris, the doctor who helped to keep Mr Diver alive during his 12-hour rescue on Saturday from under the rubble of a ski lodge that was flattened by a landslide of mud, water, concrete and wood on Wednesday

sort of Thredbo, in southern New South Wales. "The fact that he has been able to survive is absolutely remarkable."

Mr Diver and his wife, Sally, were in a ground-floor flat in Bimbadeen, a lodge where 16 other resort workers were also staying, when the landslide crashed down on it without warning just before midnight on Wednesday, taking another lodge, Carrinya, with it. Being on the ground floor probably saved Mr Diver; the debris entombed him in a concrete cocoon, surrounded by mattresses and smashed furniture from their bedroom with just enough space for him to lie flat on his back without being able to turn over.

But he lay in total darkness for the next three days, his

clothes soaked by mud and water while the temperature outside dropped at night to -6C. And he was helpless to save his wife slipping from his arms and drowning.

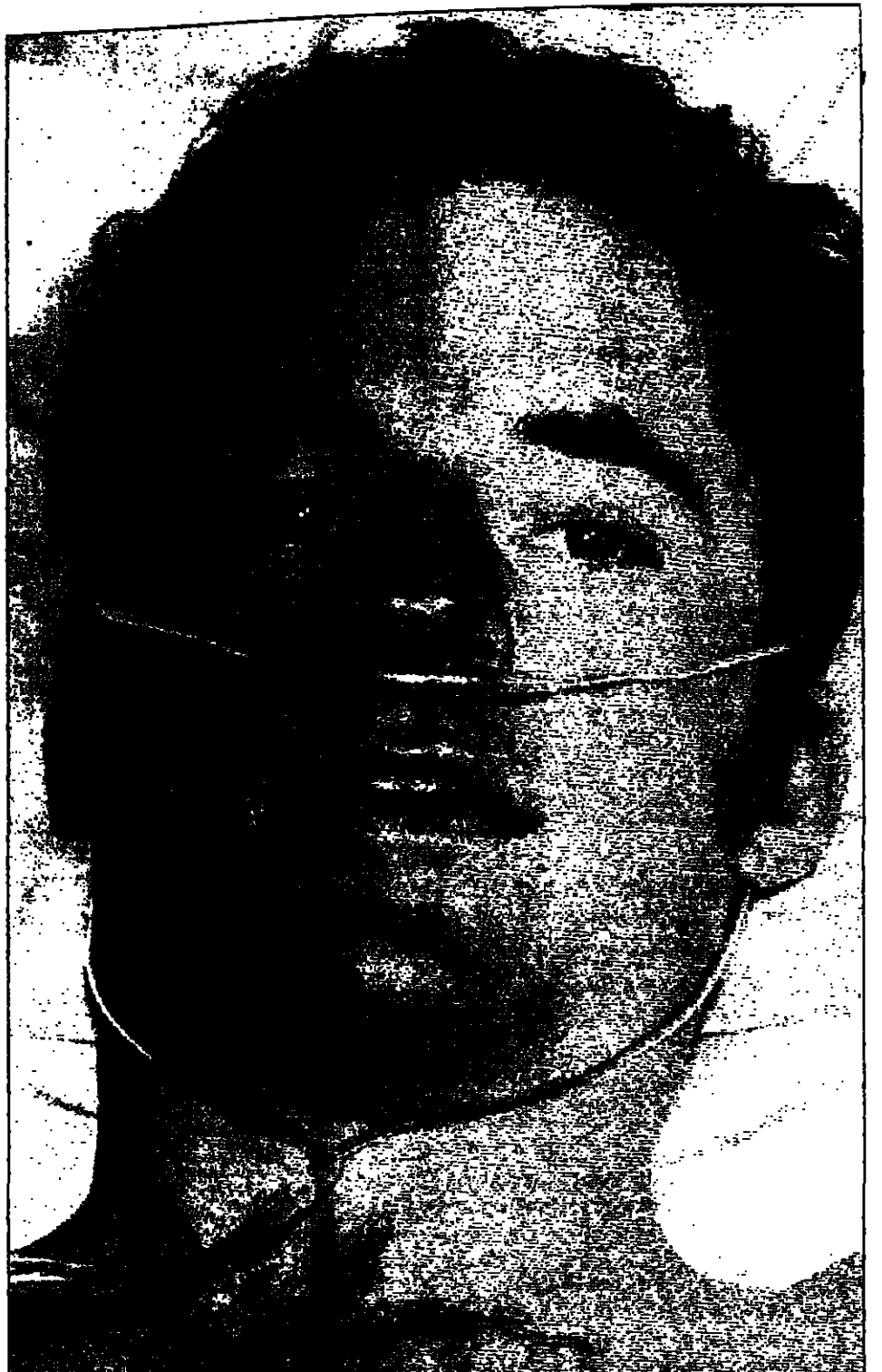
The 500-strong Thredbo rescue team had almost given Mr Diver up for dead, along with the 19 other people crushed in the landslide, until an ambulance officer heard his muffled cries from under three layers of concrete at 5.37am on Saturday. Rescuers drilled a hole through concrete to pass him a torch and a hose to pump warm air into the cavity. He was pulled to safety as darkness fell on Saturday evening.

Rob Killham, a Sydney fireman, said: "He told us that his wife had been pinned by something very heavy on the mattress

next to him after the collapse. He said that water was running through there and that his wife had drowned. He let us know very early on in the day that she had died."

Another rescuer, Bruce Tarrant, said: "He was holding his wife up out of the water under that concrete slab. There was a stream of water running down the slope and she was slipping out of his grip. He hung on desperately, he doesn't know how long. But then there was another sudden rush of mud and water and she was swept out of his arms. He had his nose pressed up against the concrete slab trying to keep his own head out of the water."

Paul Featherstone, one of two paramedics who crawled into a tunnel dug so that they could



Rescued: Ski instructor Stuart Diver lying in Canberra Hospital yesterday after being freed from the ruins of a ski lodge destroyed by a landslide last week. Photograph: Mark Smith

talk to Mr Diver, said: "He thought the lodge had been bombed. Within seconds, the whole place erupted. A stream of water ran down the hill and filled his cocoon at one stage. He had only an inch or two above his nose and he would lift his head quite remarkably and put it against the concrete slab and suck in the air. The fact that this young fellow is super fit is probably the main reason he survived."

While rescuers worked frantically overhead in below-freez-

ing conditions, Mr Featherstone kept Mr Diver's spirits alive by talking about the weather and skiing life in Thredbo. "He said at times he thought that maybe he wouldn't get out, but this guy wouldn't let that beat him," Mr Featherstone said. "When he saw light of the sky when he finally came out, he looked up and said 'That sky is fantastic.'"

The media have dubbed Mr Diver "miracle man" and called his rescuers heroes. Those rescuers include Euan Diver, Stu-

art's brother, a fireman from Thredbo. "When he was put into the ambulance, I said 'Hang in there brother,'" Euan Diver said.

As the rescuers worked through their fifth night last night, they had discovered nine bodies, leaving 10 people still missing. Mr Diver's rescue has lifted their spirits, but any hopes of finding more survivors are being compromised by the precarious nature of the rubble on a steep slope that keeps slipping further.

Whizzkids yearn for a happy office life...

Diane Coyle

The "loadsomoney" image of sharp-suited City whizz-kids, whose loyalty lies only with their next million-pound bonus, is completely misplaced according to a new survey. For all their high-spending ways, it takes more than money to keep them happy.

High-fliers working for the big investment banks are motivated by having a creative and interesting job with opportunities for personal development. They rank salary as less important, on a par with friendly colleagues and a pleasant working environment.

While their employers are right to recognise that loyalty to the company is a thing of the past, most make the mistake of thinking that leaves pay as the only thing that would motivate their employees.

The research, conducted for the City recruitment specialist Abacus Financial Selection, concludes: "Employers... still have to embrace the new Nineties philosophy."

It blames the companies for



Time out: The image of City high-fliers as being obsessed with money is misplaced, according to a new survey

clinging to outdated images from the late 1980s, the years of films such as *Wall Street* with their "greed is good" mentality. To understand their employees, the merchant banks need to watch *This Life* rather than re-runs of *Capital City*.

The survey, covering staff in the most mobile age range, 21 to 40, found that their typical stay in a job is only just over three years. But there is a

chasm between their ranking of the things that would make them stay in a job or leave it and their employers'.

Employers said salary was the most important factor in retaining staff. Employees said the most important thing was their opportunity for development and promotion. Ten per cent even said that their work gave them a purpose in life.

The bosses thought employ-

ees came back to work after their holidays either because they needed the money (90 per cent) or were worried about what had gone wrong at the office while they were away (10 per cent). But the most important reason given by employees was "missing the excitement of work".

More than four out of ten of the staff surveyed said that if they won the National Lottery they would change jobs, perhaps to work for a charity or voluntary organisation. Only two out of ten said they would quit work.

Of course, many people outside the City would see these high earners as having won life's lottery already.

Clive Donnison, a director of Abacus, said: "This research indicates that companies have to think very carefully about how to retain their good employees. Clearly, the reasons why employees stay in a job are different to what their bosses believe, and managers who remain stuck in the 1980s are likely to lose their best people."

... and for a manor of their own

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

One of the time-honoured indicators of boom times in the City is bounding ahead again. Business types who have made a packet in their thirties and forties are on the hunt in increasing numbers for a place in the country.

It's not that they want to farm or settle far beyond 90 minutes' BMW driving time from London. The favoured property has half-a-dozen bedrooms, a paddock for the ponies and enough land to provide what estate agents call "protection".

And if no suitable house is available, the new rich are also buying farmhouses.

that though farm profits were down farm land prices were steady.

The explanation in the South-east is a strong demand for what the estate agents call "residential estate farms", fuelled to a large extent by City bonuses.

Dealers and traders often end the year with double their salary, collecting an extra £100,000 or more, while executives might have seven-figure bonuses. "What else can you do with that type of money except buy property?" asked one estate agent, more than content with the answer.

The demand has echoes of the new Home Counties squirearchy created by the mid-Eighties City boom. But agents say buyers are more selective and other factors,

And this time there will be fewer barn and oast-house conversions. It is much more difficult to get planning permission to turn farm buildings into homes, though this, in turn, could increase demand for land on which to build new country houses.

A good indicator of the turnaround at the top end of the market is the proportion of foreign to UK buyers. According to Rupert Sweeting, of Knight Frank, three years ago 70 per cent of buyers of property over £1m were foreign and now more than 80 per cent are British - and three-quarters of them are connected with the City.

"They want to play the squire without the responsibility of the big farm. You can do that if you get somewhere on the edge of a village - a farmhouse

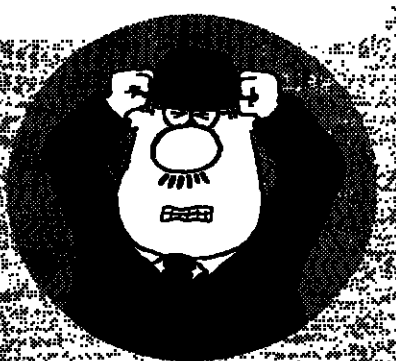
or rectory - with perhaps 100 acres. What you look out on from the dining room you own," he said. Legislation introduced in 1995 has made it easier for the new owners of "the big house" to let the bulk of the land to a real farmer used to getting his boots muddy.

A typical target property is Old Chalford Farm being sold by Savills as part of the Broadstone Manor estate near Chippenham, Wiltshire. A 19th-century Cotswold stone house with six bedrooms and 50 acres of land, lakes and a brook it is on offer for £800,000.

"We've had a lot of interest in that already," said Toby Marden, farm sales agent in the company's Banbury office. "It appeals to people who aren't necessarily going to hobby farm but want some land around them."

SELF ASSESSMENT. HOW TO AVOID GETTING STUCK.

If you were sent a tax return in April, there's no need to get up at night about filling it in. The sooner you start, the more time you'll have to get any help you might need - so here goes.



1. Open your tax return. Fill in going to the other (important) page.

2. Check you've got all the pages you need by filling in page 2 of your tax return. If you find you need any extra pages, contact HM Revenue and Customs on 0505 000 000. It's open between 9am and 5pm every day.

3. Put all your tax records to hand, such as bank and building society statements and share dividend vouchers. If you're on PAYE, you'll need your P45 or P45 Part 2. You may also get a P45 which covers work-related benefits from your employer.

4. Fill in the form by following the step-by-step guidance notes. Make sure you understand them before putting in the figures.

5. If you need help, contact your tax office - the phone number is at the top of your tax return. Or, in the evenings and at weekends, call the Self Assessment Helpline on 0505 000 000.

6. Check that you've filled in everything you need to - and don't forget to sign the completed form before sending it off. Now, rest easy to get stuck into something else.



Revenue

Self Assessment - a clearer tax system

The cronies, the changes, the criticism:

Prime Minister needs the killer instinct of his friends, reports Anthony Bevin

The accusation that the Labour Government is being run by "Crony Tony" and his chums has begun to spread at Westminster, as an increasing number of people feel excluded from the Blair project to modernise the party and the country.

The respective fortunes of Cabinet members rise or fall according to their performance, and perhaps more importantly, how they are reported in the media. But the men on the inside track are Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, who headed the legal chambers that Mr Blair and Cherie Booth joined at the start of their legal careers; Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer and long-standing friend and strategist; Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio and colleague with plans to put an end to ideology that so attract Mr Blair; and Alistair Campbell, the No 10 press secretary who makes Margaret Thatcher's hit-man, Sir Bernard Ingham, look like a cuddly teddy bear.

When Tony Blair first constructed his network of Cabinet committees, the heart of ministerial power, he put Derry Irvine in charge of future legislation, devolution to Scotland, Wales and the English regions, and the committee on



David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment

"David Blunkett is a... list of things that department has done since the election and it was incredibly impressive," Tony Blair told the *Mirror* last week. The *Dearing* report on higher education funding was misinterpreted, but otherwise Mr Blunkett scores full marks.



Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Started with a highly charged atmosphere of the streets of Northern Ireland. She has been the national leader during the negotiations with the DUP, and the DUP leader, Ian Paisley, has been a key figure in the process of peace.



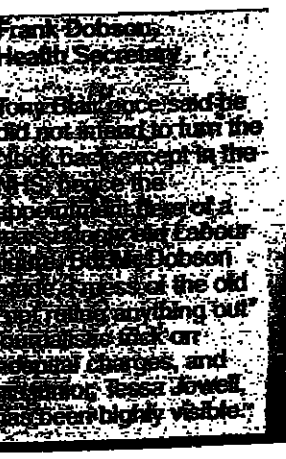
Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Chancellor's reputation for prudence and fiscal responsibility has been a key factor in his success. He has been a key figure in the process of peace.



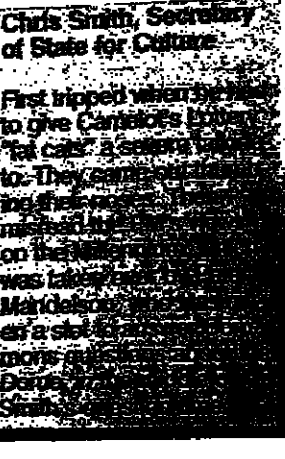
John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister

Still performing strongly, but has been a key figure in the process of peace.



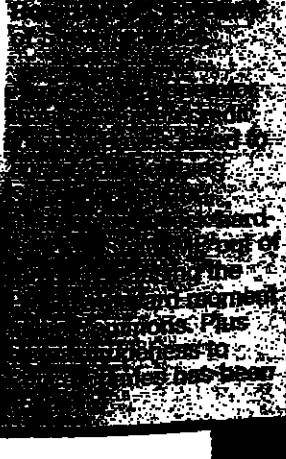
Frank Dobson, Health Secretary

First time in the history of the NHS that the Health Secretary has been a key figure in the process of peace.



Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture

First time in the history of the NHS that the Health Secretary has been a key figure in the process of peace.



Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio

First time in the history of the NHS that the Health Secretary has been a key figure in the process of peace.

Powergames: The winners and the losers

the European Convention of Human Rights. But the power and influence of Lord Irvine goes much wider than that. A minister with open access to the Prime Minister, he is said to advise and influence on a broad range of issues, big and small. He helped in the drafting of the

Labour manifesto, and when the Prime Minister cast his eye over the Labour nominations to the Commons select committees in July, it is said that Lord Irvine influenced some of the choices.

The next-door neighbour at No 11, Mr Brown remains a

friend of the Prime Minister's and another essential influence – adding his keen strategic economic and political thinking to the array of advice Mr Blair relies on.

It is suspected that Mr Brown retains a natural ambition to be Prime Minister, but, then, an in-

creasing number of ministers believe that Mr Mandelson, too, shares that ambition. There is not much that he does not get his sticky fingers on and there has even been a suggestion that he is beginning to take an interest in Northern Ireland – a prospect that causes dismay

among those who take a keen interest in Ulster's problems. His official brief says that he "will oversee policy development at all levels", which gives him a free hand and in the many Cabinet committees on which he serves, and colleagues defer to a man who is seen as "his master's voice". Mr Mandelson is a master of self-promotion, his attachment to Mr Blair is very strong, and his views are heard. *The Blair Revolution*, the book that he co-authored with

Roger Liddle, a former SDP parliamentary candidate and current member of the No 10 policy unit, is an Ordinance Survey map to the Blair project for the modernisation of politics.

Alistair Campbell, former political editor of the *Daily Mirror*, and now press secretary, travels everywhere Mr Blair goes, and to see them writing and re-writing each other's draft speeches and articles is a pure delight. He could be taken for

a bodyguard or an assassin; he is in fact a buddy. But like Lord Irvine, Mr Brown and Mr Mandelson, Mr Campbell shares a quality that is unusually rare in politics – the killer instinct. All four men have a ruthlessness that can shock when fully exposed. There is no denying Mr Blair's intelligence, courage and tenacity, but perhaps he needs the support of his four musketeers to go for the enemy – Tory or Labour – and kill.

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Brown takes a gamble

There have been more dramatic changes in the running of the economy since 1 May than in any other 100-day period since the Second World War.

Gordon Brown has dropped one bombshell after another with his swift decisions to give the Bank of England the independence to set interest rates, collect financial regulation under one roof with the creation of an all-in-one City watchdog, and use the Budget to tackle long-term economic problems rather than short-term business cycle management.

The theme is setting in place a framework that will direct policies towards improving the long-term health of the economy.

Treasury

But not surprisingly, the Chancellor has left the City shellshocked, and views of Labour's strategy are mixed. For one thing, the Bank has used its new freedom to raise the cost of borrowing every month, and might well do so again this week. People have less sympathy with the aim of ending the cycle of boom and bust during the boom stage.

The Bank's aim is to stop the economy overheating and hit the Chancellor's 2.5 per cent inflation target. But rising interest rates have driven the strong pound still higher.

Industry is critical of the

Bank, and of Mr Brown for not using the Budget to crack down directly on consumer spending.

However, the Budget signalled that the Government is concentrating on deeper issues. Labour will make a lasting mark on the economy with radical change in the tax and benefits system, a re-ordering of priorities in spending and reform of corporate taxation.

This is a big gamble. If it were easy to reduce poverty and boost long-term prosperity, others would have done so. But if the gamble pays off, these reforms will prove even more dramatic than the early changes.

Diane Coyle

Enthusiasm for new laws

A flurry of initiatives and policy reviews have marked out the Home Office and its head, Jack Straw, as one of the busiest departments of the new regime.

Mr Straw's enthusiasm for new legislation and his willingness to listen and act, such as settling up the inquiry into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence and an all-out ban on handguns, have won him praise.

He has also had to grapple with the prison overcrowding crisis, for which he has won an extra £45m from the Treasury. Prisons will be his biggest area in the coming year and the most likely area for a political crisis if inmates riot or funds run out.

Home Office

He has continued his theme of youth crime and greater responsibility for parents, much of which will be contained in the Crime and Disorder Bill. But he has also angered penal reformers, left wingers, and probation officers, by adopting many of the ideas of his predecessor, Michael Howard, and by performing a number of U-turns.

Some of these, such as the use of a prison ship and giving the go-ahead for more private jails, have been dictated by cost. But his decision in favour of five "child jails" and to extend the use of electronic tagging are reversals. Others – naming and sham-

ing juveniles, banning driving licences for non-motoring offences and outlawing underage drinking in public – are straight lifts from the Tory handbook.

Despite growing discontent from some previous allies, Mr Straw and his department have shown a strong determination not to be derailed and are expected to continue with further fundamental changes to the criminal justice system.

At the Lord Chancellor's department, long-overdue reform is also in the air, with promised legislation on freedom of information and incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Jason Bennetto

Reviews but little action

The harsh truth about Labour in government and the environment is that this is a second-tier issue. While promises were made that this would be "the greenest government ever", economic growth, cutting employment, and using any revenue increase available to improve education and the health service all get higher priority. That, after all, is what the voters want.

But ministers have moved rapidly to start implementing manifesto promises on the environment. Among the most significant could be the creation of a new parliamentary "green audit" committee similar to the

Transport

powerful Public Accounts Committee, with a broad remit to inquire into progress on sustainable development.

The new government promised a far better working relationship with Europe, but it has just suffered a defeat over animal rights in its attempt to ban the use of steel-jawed leghold traps by the fur trade.

Joining environment and transport together in one "superministry" headed by the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott seems, so far, to be a win for the environment in the scal-

ing down of the road-building programme. But despite Mr Prescott's intention to shift people from their cars to public transport, little has so far been done to facilitate change. London Transport remains underfunded, bus wars still erupt and ministers have yet to fulfil their pledge to re-regulate the railways.

Most announcements so far concern policy reviews. These signal that the Government cares about an issue without actually having to do anything – apart from think and plan – for many months.

Nicholas Schoon and Randeep Ramesh

From welfare to work

The Government quickly showed it meant business over the welfare state with a succession of measures to transform health and social security.

Lone parents were targeted with a new deal to get them back to work; all those with a school-age child were to be invited for job-search interviews and lottery money was allocated for after-school clubs. The sick and disabled also received a £200m boost from the windfall fund to enhance their work prospects.

For the NHS, there was an extra £1.2bn to ease pressure on resources. Public health, under

Health

Tessa Jowell, also shot up the agenda with the Government promising to ban tobacco advertising and setting new targets to reduce the health gap between rich and poor.

The "two-tier" system of fundholding brought in by the previous government was also abolished, with Health Secretary Frank Dobson saying that NHS trusts would be required to operate common waiting lists regardless of whether the patients were referred by fundholding or resources. Public health, under

Government also reassured the business community, giving the go-ahead for the first hospitals in the history of the NHS to be built with private money.

It was not a complete triumph for the new administration, however. The Government was criticised for going ahead with Tory plans to cut lone-parent benefits, along with other measures to restrict housing benefit, child allowances, Jobseekers' allowances and council and disability allowance. Such cuts represent a saving of £1bn by the end of this Parliament.

Glenda Cooper

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100 days of Labour

how Blair's revolution got underway

PM sends out the right signals to young people

Agnes Severin and Louise Hancock

For those who have never known anything but a Tory government the past three months have been invigorating. Young people appreciate the more open and relaxed style of Tony Blair's government. More importantly, the Labour government has indicated its willingness to listen to youth concerns, and take action.

As Richard Benson, editor of *The Face* magazine, points out: "The relative youth and informality of Blair and his government does impress young people... He sends out the right signals."

Yet some young people think he is trying a little too hard to be all things to all people. "We don't need a Prime Minister attending night clubs," said Miranda Piercy, a 19-year-old Liberal Democrat supporter. "Tony Blair is trying to get into the youth culture, but most of the time he just misses."

Mr Blair and his ministers do

seem to be making a real effort to address the major needs of young people in education, employment, and housing.

Diana McMahon, of the Prince's Trust, said: "Even before the election, senior Labour figures were holding discussion forums with youth organisations: they really want to take advantage of our grassroots knowledge of the current problems in society."

The result has been a number of innovative, though as yet unproven, changes in policy aimed at improving the situation facing today's youth. In education, David Blunkett's White Paper on *Excellence in Schools* seeks to improve teaching standards in schools.

Next January, the Government, in conjunction with youth training organisations such as the Prince's Trust, is to introduce its "New Deal", a new programme aimed at unemployed young people who have been out of work for six months or more, or who have never held

a permanent job. The housing charity Shelter is delighted that Mr Blair has honoured his election pledge to release the Capital Receipts from the Tories' Right-to-Buy housing scheme; it will mean an extra £135m over two years for local authorities to use in housing related projects. A Shelter spokesman said: "It is no longer a situation of them against us, but them and us."

The Government has, however, been criticised by those who claim that Labour is simply undoing some of the damage inflicted by the Tory cuts, without really tackling the fundamental issues. Gabriella Civico, chair of the British Youth Council, believes that "without such moves as major job creation and new affordable housing, anything that Labour does will simply be cosmetic."



Won over: The Blair government's willingness to listen to youth concerns and take action has impressed many young people Photograph: Reuters

PM's good intentions win street cred

Stewart Falconer, 17, bank clerk: "He is passing a lot of new laws, but he will calm down very soon." Christopher Desmoulin, 26, French photographer: "He seems to be less of a technocrat than John Major, and a more humane person too." Julian May, 23, teacher: "He seems to be someone who is not afraid to take on the big issues."

ing all the time. But he has good intentions. Anyway anything is better than the Conservatives." Michael Pickles, 23, equity research analyst: "An energetic 100 days, but lacks substance. Some policies were not run first by the public, such as the independence of the Bank of England and the changes to the party conference."

Overhaul of schools policy

Tony Blair ordered ministers not to comment on his first 100 days in power in advance of a scheduled statement by John Prescott, David Blunkett, Education Secretary, and George Robertson, Defence Secretary, were the only two ministers to respond to our request for their views.

Since the election, we have made enormous strides in implementation of both education and employment policy.

I will limit myself to highlighting four key areas where we have already made significant progress.

First, standards in schools. In July we published the Government's first White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*. It sets out plans for the most fundamental overhaul of education since 1944. At its heart is the drive to improve standards in our schools.

Hand in hand with this we have:

- Established the "standards and effectiveness unit" under Professor Michael Barber.
- Established a "national standards task force" under my chairmanship.
- Set up a pilot project of 50 summer literacy schools.
- Set new national targets in literacy and numeracy for 11-year-olds.
- Taken action on 18 failing schools.

Second, on provision for pre-school children, and limits on class sizes for five-, six-, and sev-

Education

en-year-olds. We have ended the wasteful nursery vouchers scheme. Instead local education authorities (LEAs), in partnership with other providers, will give children and parents the widest possible choice of pre-school opportunity.

We are discussing with LEAs the best way of implementing our pledge on class sizes by using the funds freed up from bringing to an end the assisted-places scheme.

Third, action on employment.

In his budget, Gordon Brown [the Chancellor of the Exchequer] announced funding from the windfall levy for the "new deal" for 18- to 25-year-olds and the long-term unemployed. So far, we have put in place the "new deal task force" headed by Sir Peter Davis - a new advisory group involving the voluntary sector and environmental and local employer groups - and agreed the broad design of the initiative. Extensive consultation has begun. The programme will begin in January.

Fourth, higher education. In higher education we have grasped the nettle and taken the first steps to put the system on a sound footing which will allow increased access, quality and equity. This is just a taste of the foundation laid for the initiatives of the future.

David Blunkett

Strength ... but not at any price

Looking back on the first 100 days, it is fair to say that the pace has been breathtaking.

Already, we are making a difference and starting to fulfil our manifesto commitments. These include our Strategic Defence Review to reassess essential security interests and defence needs for the next century; and a ban on the import, export, transfer and manufacture of all forms of anti-personnel landmines as well as a moratorium on their use.

Beyond our manifesto commitments, we are also actively looking at how we can expand opportunities for women ... and how we can recruit more people from ethnic minorities. Similarly, we have initiated a review into the executions of First World War soldiers, and have announced a new package of 20 measures for Gulf War veterans.

On procurement, we have helped to secure progress on programmes on Eurofighter whilst pursuing a new policy of "smart procurement" designed to get the best possible equipment for our troops whilst achieving the best possible value for money.

Last month, for example, we

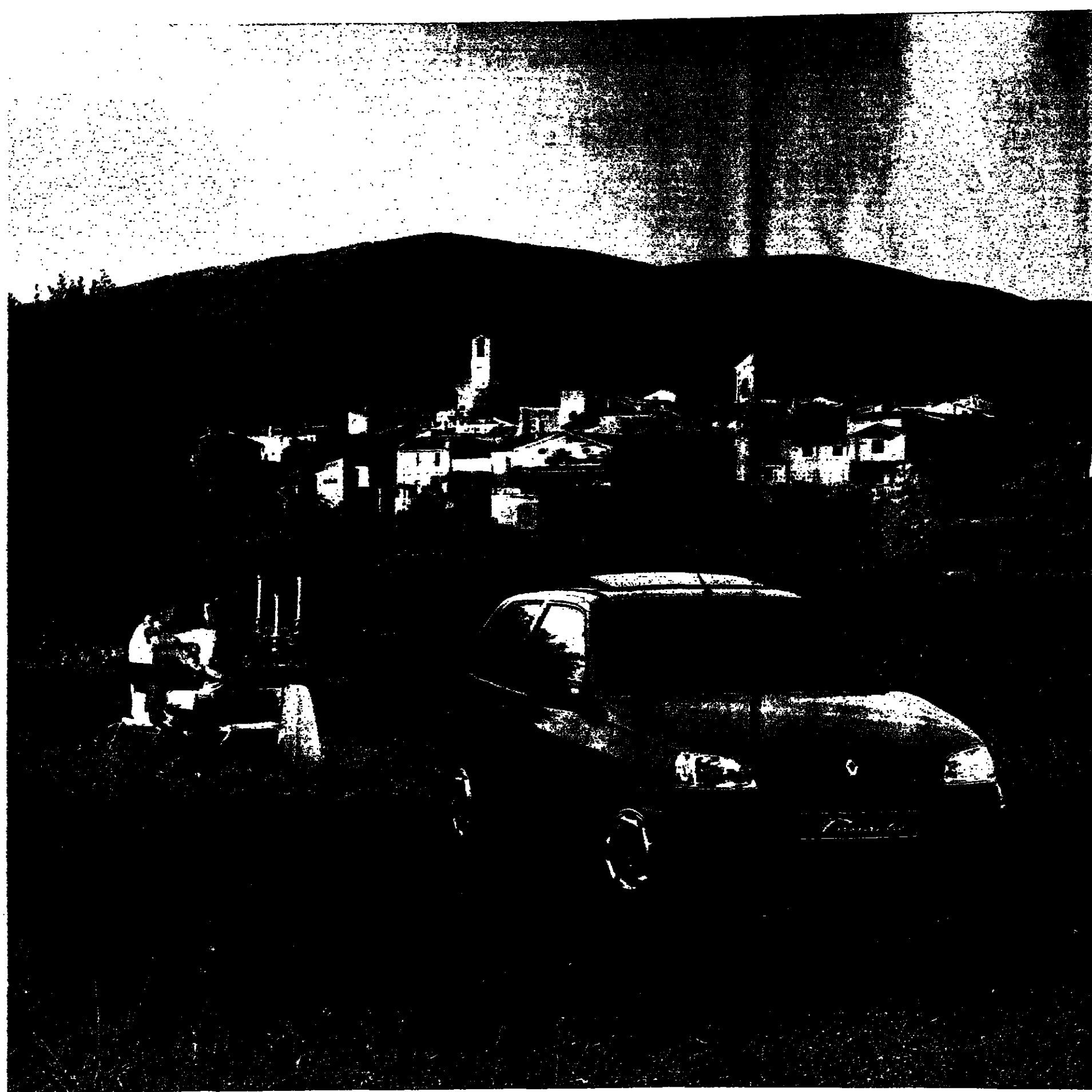
Defence

issued a Request for Proposals for 40-50 Future Large Aircraft on a competitive basis. And we are currently drawing up proposals to be published in the autumn on how we can give effect to plans for defence diversification as outlined in our manifesto.

Our achievements extend to the international stage as well. At the European Inter-Governmental conference in Amsterdam, we successfully retained our veto on defence matters whilst winning for the first time the explicit recognition that Nato is the foundation of our and other allies' common defence. And in Bosnia, we have led the way in bringing those indicted for war crimes to trial.

Over the next five years ... it is vital that we tackle head-on the problem of overstretch in our armed forces by providing a clearer match between our foreign policy commitments and our defence resources ... Our overriding aim must be strong defence - but not at any price. The Strategic Defence Review will enable us to do just that.

George Robertson



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Patten in storm over HK 'secrets'

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Critics of Chris Patten's term as Governor of Hong Kong were said last night to be behind an MI6 inquiry into claims that he breached the Official Secrets Act by leaking details of a secret deal between London and Peking.

The former foreign secretary, Lord Howe, was among those who protested to the Government about the claims being made in the television documentary and book, *The Last Governor*, by Jonathan Dimbleby.

Mr Patten's friends claim the "Hong Kong mafia" at the Foreign Office is trying to get its revenge against Mr Patten, who was reviled for upsetting China with his drive towards democracy before the final handover. They are furious with Mr Patten for claiming that Britain entered into a gentlemen's agreement with China to renounce its promises and to manipulate a test of public opinion in 1987 to suggest that Hong Kong did not want democracy.

Lord Howe attacked the book as "lamentable" and rejected its "surreal and unjust accusations of betrayal and treachery and foul play by senior government ministers and civil servants".

It is understood that protests were also made to the Government by Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, Mr Patten's predecessor, and Sir Percy Cradock, who was Margaret Thatcher's chief adviser on China.

Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio, confirming that an investigation was under way, said he did not know if Mr Patten would be prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act. "All I know is that the issue -

the matter, rather than the individual - is under investigation by the authorities," he said. "That will be done in a proper, objective and authoritative way. They have no alternative but to investigate it when allegations are made that secret intelligence material has been passed to individuals outside." Mr Mandelson told BBC Radio 4's *The World This Week*.

The Foreign Office was officially avoiding comment but senior Whitehall sources last night confirmed that MI6 was carrying out the investigation into whether the Official Secrets Act had been breached.

"We are not pointing the finger at anyone, but it is true to say that an inquiry is being carried out," said the source. "Breaking the Official Secrets Act is one of the most serious offences. There is genuine concern about the intelligence reports being leaked along with highly sensitive reports. That could have been very serious."

"The stage we are at at the moment is to see whether there has been a breach."

Foreign Office officials are waiting to see whether the evidence is strong enough to warrant a prosecution against Mr Patten for allegedly leaking classified documents. Sir John Coles, head of the diplomatic service, is angry that details of papers he allowed Mr Patten to see appear to have been divulged.

None of the papers were quoted directly but officials believe there were items which appeared in the book and could only have come from the papers.

Mr Patten saw the government papers from the mid-1980s earlier this year, before he stepped down from office, on the understanding that they would not be revealed and would be destroyed after he read them.



Feeling the beat: Members of the Criterion Jazz Band taking part in Jazz on a Summer's day in Princes Street Garden yesterday. The performance, Britain's biggest single jazz event, was part of the Edinburgh International Jazz and Blues festival. Photograph: Mike Wilkinson

Lucan's son faces long title fight

Glenda Cooper

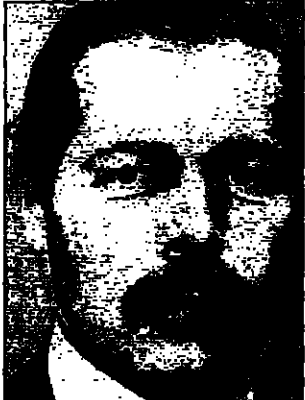
The son of Lord Lucan, the peer missing for two decades, was warned yesterday that he could face years of struggle to assume his father's title.

George, Lord Bingham, who was seven when Lord Lucan disappeared, is said to have told friends he intends to have his father officially declared dead so that he can take up the seat in the Lords that has remained vacant for the past 23 years.

"To do so he would need a writ in the Royal Courts of Justice declaring his father dead, on the basis that he had not been seen alive for at least seven years. The matter would also have to be investigated by the House of Lords' privileges committee, which could take two years. Lord Lucan disappeared after his children's nanny, Sandra

Rivett, was found bludgeoned to death in the family home in Belgravia, London, in November 1974. He is still wanted for questioning over the murder. Although there have been dozens of unconfirmed sightings, friends insist he is dead.

Harold Brooks-Baker, of *Burke's Peerage*, said: "I had heard the family were going to try and reclaim the title... But the idea that Lord Lucan's son is going to find it clear sailing is very doubtful. I imagine it will go through eventually, but the committee will go down every single avenue to see if there is any chance his father is still alive." There were no known precedents, he said. "It is very likely there will be stumbling blocks and I have little doubt that people you have never heard of will come out of the woodwork and claim to have



The missing Lord Lucan (left) and his son, Lord Bingham

seen Lord Lucan. These will all have to be investigated." The Scotland Yard file on the case is still open and David Gerring, one of the detectives who hunted Lord Lucan throughout the 1970s, yesterday said he believed



sure her husband is dead. Lord Bingham was reported finally to have made the decision to act after the death last month of the financier Sir James Goldsmith, who was a friend of his father.

Sir James had always denied suggestions that he helped Lord Lucan to escape, but the family are said to believe that there are now fewer doubts about the peer's fate.

Lord Lucan has already been officially "sworn dead" through a court order known as a deed of representation, which was obtained by the family in 1995. This enabled his trustees, Coutts & Co, to deal with his financial affairs as if he were dead, administering his English estate, worth £150,000, meeting his tax liabilities and giving his three children their inheritance, although it did not allow Lord Bingham to assume the title.

Tories step up attack over Simon

Colin Brown

Margaret Beckett today will face allegations that she misled the House of Commons in an intensification of the attack by John Redwood over the shareholdings of Lord Simon of Highbury and Canonbury.

The decision by Mr Redwood to make one of the gravest charges against the President of the Board of Trade underlines his determination not to let the matter drop, in spite of Lord Simon's assurances that he has acted properly.

Mr Redwood's pursuit of Lord Simon, a former chairman of BP, is backed by William Hague, the Tory leader, who clashed with Tony Blair in the Commons on the issue last week.

The Conservative spokesman on trade and industry is insisting that there is a conflict of interests between Lord Simon's holding of BP shares worth £2m in a Jersey trust, and his role as a competition minister.

Mr Redwood's charge of misleading the House arises from the discovery that Lord Simon's holdings of 2,351 shares in Grand Met, worth £14,000, were still in his own name last week, in spite of assurances by Mrs Beckett that they were in a blind trust.

On 23 July Mr Redwood was told that Lord Simon, the Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe, had "completed the arrangements to place his non-BP share portfolio in a blind trust".

Mr Redwood said: "I am quite happy that people make money and put money in Jersey trusts but this is a government in which the Chancellor has said he is cracking down on tax loopholes like the Jersey fund."

The code of conduct issued by the Government for ministers last week says that misleading the House is a sackable offence. But government sources dismissed the charges against Mrs Beckett. "Lord Simon assigned all his shares into a blind trust. These things take time because you need broker's signatures. It just like any other minister, like Heseltine and Paul Channon, when they were ministers," said a source.

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Both gifts are Limited Editions and are only available while stocks last, from department stores, larger branches of Boots, perfumeries and good chemists.

... ..

Hamas denies role in NY bomb scare

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

As police and FBI investigators continued inquiries into what is officially said to have been a narrowly averted terrorist attack on the New York subway, the circumstances of the case seemed to be growing murkier.

On Friday, official sources in New York appeared to accept that the two men shot and wounded during the previous day's raid on a Brooklyn flat were associated with the Middle Eastern Hamas group, which had admitted responsibility for the Jerusalem suicide attack the previous day.

By yesterday, however, that link was disputed, apparently by Hamas itself.

A fax to news agencies on Saturday said: "We deny any

connection between us and the prisoners or the accusations against them. Hamas does not consider the American people an enemy and it does not target any of its communities."

Earlier this year, in a move supposedly designed to prevent the man in question becoming a martyr to the Palestinian cause, the US allowed a Hamas political figure, Mahmoud Abu Marzouk, to go to Jordan and ignored an Israeli request for his extradition.

Mr Marzouk added his voice to the denial yesterday, saying it was "ridiculous and a total lie" to say Hamas had anything to do with the two men.

The only evidence cited by US officials to connect the men, Gazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer, 23, and Lafi Khalil, 22, with Hamas was literature found in the flat.

a vague expression of sympathy with the Jerusalem bombers by Mr Mezer, and what was said to be the draft of a suicide note.

Families of the men - Palestinians from the West Bank - also expressed reservations about the likelihood of their involvement in terrorism. Mr Mezer and Mr Khalil, who are still in hospital, have been charged with conspiracy to blow up the New York subway and with possessing explosives.

The spotlight has shifted from the alleged bomb plot to how the men arrived in the US. There was consternation over reports, not denied by immigration officials, that Mr Mezer had been caught three times trying to enter the US illegally from Canada.

The third time, it is said, he declared that he was considered

a terrorist in Israel and asked for asylum.

After his first request was turned down he decided against reapplying and was given 60 days to leave. That period expires on 23 August.

At least one of the men arrested in possession of bomb-making equipment, therefore, was in the US with the knowledge and acquiescence of immigration authorities, who had a written acknowledgement of his alleged involvement in terrorism. The question that begs to be answered is whether this was a result of lax immigration procedures, as the Mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, claimed, or whether the intelligence services had deliberately allowed him in for the purpose of tracking or infiltrating possible terrorist groups.

Fighting to fly the flag of Allah over every part of Palestine

Israeli security agents flew to New York at the weekend to assist the FBI in its investigation of a suspected Arab plot to blow up the city's subway system.

At the same time it was reported that the US Middle East trouble-shooter, Dennis Ross, was returning to the region later this week with a revised formula for kick-starting Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

The draft's key elements will remain an Israeli settlement freeze, balanced by a Palestinian drive against violent Islamic resistance to the Oslo accords.

But in the wake of the twin suicide explosion in a Jerusalem market, which killed 13 Israeli civilians last Wednesday, Mr Ross is expected to strengthen demands that Yasser Arafat curb the men of violence.

Israeli security sources admitted yesterday that they still had no firm lead on the identity of the two bombers in the Mahane Yehuda market. Forensic tests have eliminated two young

Eric Silver looks at Hamas, prime suspect for last week's market-place bombing

Palestinians who went missing over a year ago from a village near Hebron.

Investigators are checking the possibility that the bombers came from abroad. As if to conceal their origins, the pair removed all labels from their clothing.

The Israelis are inclined, however, to take claims of responsibility by Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, at face value. Hamas, the larger and more political of the two Palestinian Islamic movements, perpetrated 10 of the 14 previous mass attacks inside Israel since the 1993 peace agreement. Its bombers killed 94 of the 139 victims.

Hamas has a wider agenda than its rival, Islamic Jihad. It aspires to influence the future of Palestine, as a party not just a ginger group. It runs nursery schools, clinics and youth clubs. It builds mosques. It educates

and mobilises in the cause of "flying the flag of Allah over every part of Palestine". Recognition of Israel is sacrilege.

Hamas operates through separate political and military wings. The visible leadership invariably denies knowledge of armed activity. Yet Hamas has always embraced violence as a legitimate instrument.

It traces its roots to the battle against Zionist colonisation in the 1930s. Its military wing takes its name from Izzeddin el-Kassab, a legendary fighter of those days.

A Hamas leaflet distributed in October 1990 called for Jews to be murdered and their property burned. "Every Jew," it said, "is a settler and it is our duty to kill him."

Ideologically, the movement was inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Cells began operating in the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the Israeli

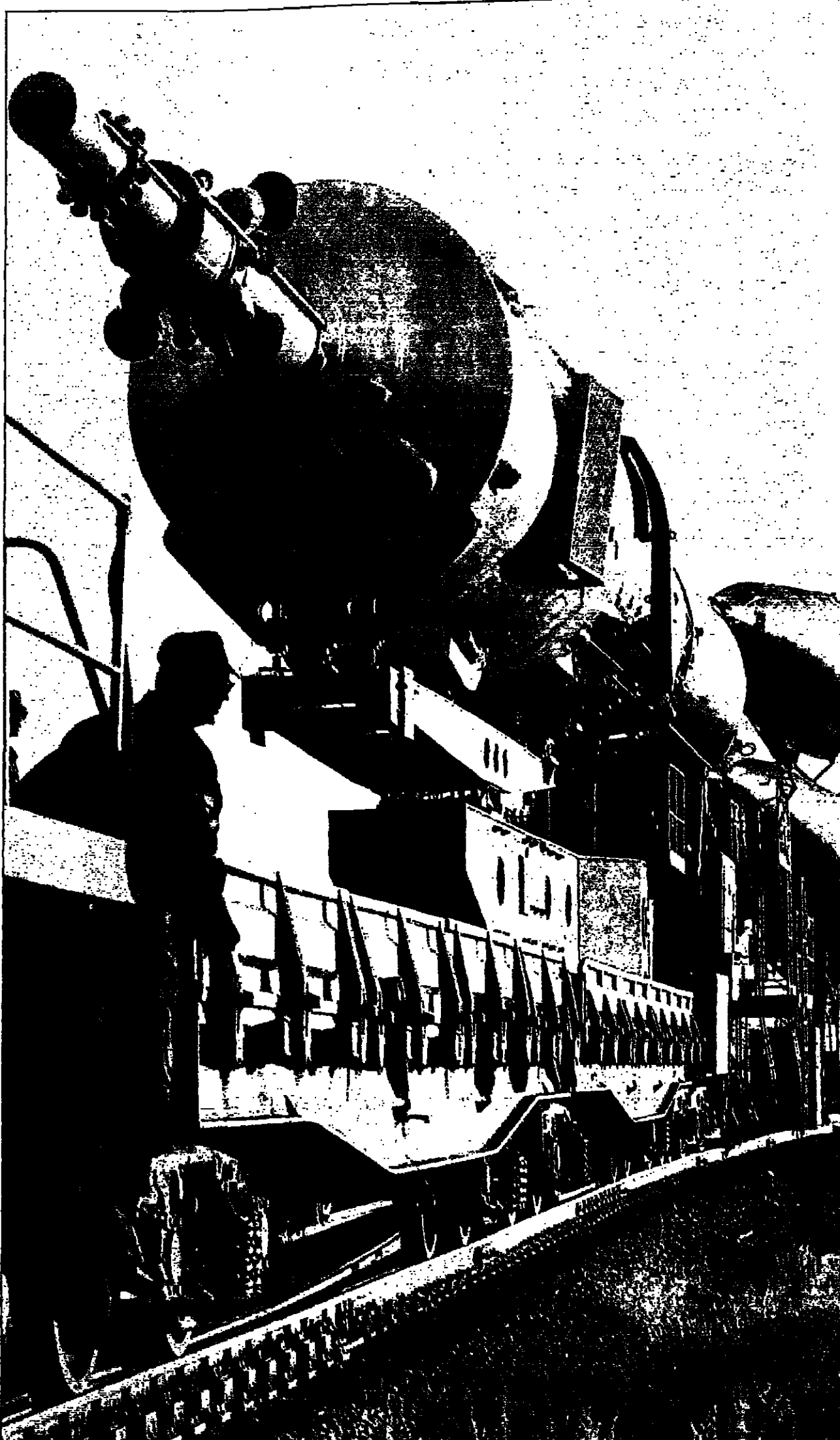
conquest in 1967, but a formal organisation was founded only in 1978 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. The sheikh has been in an Israeli prison since 1989, convicted of organising terrorist cells and operations.

Recent opinion polls suggest that, despite the disenchantment with the Oslo peace, Hamas enjoys limited support in the Palestinian street.

Khalil Shikaki, a Nablus-based political scientist, has, however, monitored a doubling in support for violence (from 20 per cent to 40 per cent) since Benjamin Netanyahu began building Jewish homes in East Jerusalem in March. Yet the Palestinians are still fighting shy of the Islamic groups.

"Hamas has been losing steadily," Dr Shikaki said, "not because Hamas's message or Hamas's means are rejected."

"It is more because Hamas is divided between those who insist on ideological purity and the pragmatists who would like to see changes in the ideology to reflect the reality on the ground."



Going up: The Soyuz TM-26 that will tomorrow launch on a mission to repair the troubled Mir space station being moved to the launch pad at Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan. It will carry Commander Anatoly Solovoyov, one of Russia's most decorated cosmonauts, and flight engineer Pavel Vinogradov
Photograph: AFP

US hid spy plane projects behind UFO hysteria

Washington (AP) - As hysteria grew over alleged UFO sightings in the 1950s, the US Air Force concocted stories to hide the fact that its secret spy planes had been spotted, an intelligence study says.

The historian Gerald Haines writes that the air force, responding to purported UFO sightings during the Cold War years, frequently provided explanations that were untrue to deflect attention from the planes. "Over half UFO reports from the late 1950s through the 1960s were accounted for by manned reconnaissance flights (namely the U-2) over the US," Mr Haines wrote in the spring issue of *Studies of Intelligence*.

an unclassified CIA journal. The article was found at the weekend on the Internet.

Concern about people finding out about the planes "led the air force to make misleading and deceptive statements to the public in order to allay public fears and to protect an extraordinarily sensitive national security project," Mr Haines wrote.

"While perhaps justified, this deception added fuel to the later conspiracy theories and the cover-up controversy" regarding the existence of UFOs, he added.

Mr Haines, a historian at the National Reconnaissance Office, based his article on a re-

view of CIA documents from the late 1940s to 1990.

He described how the air force sought to deflect attention from development of its high-altitude experimental aircraft, the U-2 and SR-71.

Early U-2s were silver and reflected the sun's rays and often appeared as fiery objects to people below, Mr Haines said. They were later painted black.

Air force investigators, "aware of the secret U-2 flights, tried to explain away such sightings by linking them to natural phenomena such as ice crystals and temperature inversions."

By 1956 the air force internally had clear explanations for 96 per cent of UFO sightings, Mr Haines wrote, referring to the experimental aircraft.

"They were careful, however, not to reveal the true cause of the sighting to the public."

At the height of the Cold War the CIA hid its involvement in studies of UFO sightings because it feared that if word came out it would lead to a national hysteria that could be exploited by the Soviet Union.

John Pike, director of space policy at the Federation of American Scientists, said the study raises questions about other possible government cover-ups involving UFOs.

"The flying-saucer community is definitely on to something," he said.

Iran's new leader proffers peace

Tehran (AP) - Mohammad Khatami, a moderate cleric confirmed yesterday as Iran's new president, said his country wants peaceful co-existence with the rest of the world. The outgoing president, Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, handed over the leadership at a ceremony attended by ministers, officials and ambassadors.

"What is seen as the transfer of power in other countries is little more than the transfer of responsibility in the Islamic Republic," said Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani, a moderate, and Hojatoleslam Khatami's political ally, who has stepped down after two four-year terms.

Hojatoleslam Khatami, the Islamic Republic's fifth elected president, won the election in May with 20 million votes, compared to 7 million for the hard-line challenger, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri.



Mohammad Khatami: Dig at 'high-handed big countries'

In his speech, he said Iran wanted peaceful co-existence, but made an oblique reference to problems with the US. "Internationally, we seek peace... but because we want this for all of humanity, we oppose the high-handedness of certain big countries."

The vote for Hojatoleslam

Khatami, 54, was seen as a mandate to ease Islamic strictures imposed after the 1979 Islamic revolution and to forge ahead with reforms to combat inflation and unemployment. But hard-liners, still reeling from defeat, may use their majority in the Majlis, or parliament, to challenge his choice of ministers and to stall policies.

And although Hojatoleslam Khatami's ideas on women, youth and the role of religion are radical for an Iranian cleric, he is not expected fundamentally to change Iran's foreign policy or clergy-dominated politics.

A former minister of culture, Hojatoleslam Khatami is credited with reviving Iranian music and cinema after the 1979 revolution.

Although revolutionary clerics banned live concerts, Hojatoleslam Khatami allowed them. He also helped lift the

ban on women singing in public by permitting a concert by the Iranian singer Parisa, albeit for an all-female audience.

□ Bonn - Germany's Foreign Ministry rejected overtures from Iran to allow the return of ambassadors from European Union nations to Tehran, Reuters reports.

Earlier, Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani indicated that ambassadors of EU states may now return to Tehran, but Bonn's envoy must be the last. A German Foreign Ministry spokesman said such comments did not alter Bonn's understanding of the current EU policy of keeping Tehran ambassadors at home. All EU states bar Greece recalled their ambassadors from Tehran after a German court concluded in April that Iran's leaders had ordered the 1992 assassination of four Iranian Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant.

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سكنا من الاصل

Refugees flood Thai camps as Cambodia returns to dark ages



Cambodian refugees are trapped between the possibility of death in the civil war and the certainty of starvation from crop failure Photograph: Apichart Weerawong/Reuters

Matthew Chance
Aranyaprathet, Thailand

Miserable and soaked by incessant rains, there is an overriding sense of despair amongst the thousands of Cambodians who have escaped the terror of renewed fighting in their country.

At Thai "reception" camps, set up to embrace an influx of beleaguered and frightened civilians, mothers fan the weak flames of makeshift stoves fuelled with damp wood. Their children, seemingly oblivious to suffering, play and dance in the torrents of rain beating down on tents of leaky plastic sheeting. There are few men, bar the elderly, or women without children amongst these muddy refugees.

They have escaped to Thailand but have left family behind to work the land in the paddy fields of northwestern Cambodia: a harsh but pragmatic line drawn between the possibility of death or injury from a stray bullet fired by one rival Cambodian government faction at

another, and the certainty of starvation without a dry-season rice harvest.

"We packed our belongings two days ago because our loved ones wanted us to be safe," said Aim Lem, a 35-year-old Khmer woman who crossed over two days ago on Saturday night into Thailand with her six young children. "But now we are wet and hungry, and I cannot stop worrying about the safety of the rest of my family," she said, clasping a small baby, naked and screaming, to her breast.

The camps are filling up by the day with refugees. More than 6,000 arrived over the weekend, carrying what belongings they could manage to drag through the mud. Some 15,000 more are poised to enter Thailand further north in the province of Surin, as rival Cambodian forces lock in a bitter stand-off, firing barrages of artillery and rockets across the jungle.

Already, according to aid workers at the border, more than 70 per cent of the displaced civilians are affected with illness.

There are fears that without adequate sanitation the waterlogged ground on which the refugee camps have been sited may prove prone to malaria and cholera.

The United Nations' refugee agency, and other aid groups, have been struggling to provide everyone with just the bare minimum: food, basic medical care and sufficient shelter from the weather.

No one is comparing this crisis to the calamity of the late 1970s, when as many as 500,000 starving Cambodians, shattered by war and the genocidal Khmer Rouge, lingered on Thailand's long border. But although the numbers are smaller this time, the people are fleeing for similar reasons, and with no less fear for their lives.

"We all thought the shelling would kill us," said Sok In, a 63-year-old carpenter. "We are sad to leave our land, but for our children's sake we had to come here," he added.

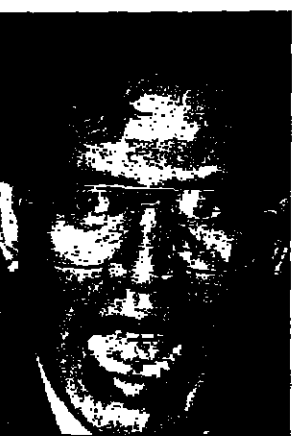
Cambodia's problem was, and still is, conflict. The old alliance between royalist and

Khmer Rouge forces has been re-formed. Their old enemy, Hun Sen, Cambodia's prime minister, is also their new one. Since his bloody *coup d'état* last month, which ousted Prince Norodom Ranariddh, his rival co-premier, Hun Sen has effectively turned Cambodia's clocks back to the dark days before a UN-sponsored peace effort in 1991 imposed a fragile harmony on the fractured nation.

With most of the country firmly in his grip, its people's hopes for democracy all but gone, Cambodia's north-west is once again a battlefield. As the lines stand, Hun Sen's larger and better equipped forces have the upper hand. The opposing soldiers of Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party have been dogged by low morale and indiscipline, which has led to significant troop defections and losses of strategic ground over recent weeks. Most recently the key town of Poipet, to Hun Sen's advancing forces. There are now only pockets of FUNCINPEC

resistance, notably at Anlong Veng, the jungle stronghold of the Khmer Rouge.

The unfavourable military odds have produced their own refugees from the FUNCINPEC ranks: more than 300 soldiers loyal to Prince Ranariddh were granted permission to pass through Thailand at the weekend, said one senior Thai commander. They were stripped of their guns, rocket launchers and their uniforms before being driven as "civilians" by Thai soldiers from Aranyaprathet to border areas where they could re-establish their severed links with royalist comrades-in-arms.



Hun Sen: Better equipped forces have the upper hand

significant shorts

Amritsar massacre dogs Queen's India visit

A proposed visit by the Queen to India has sparked demands that she apologise for a British massacre of unarmed civilians in 1919. On the harvest festival of Baisakhi in April 1919 British troops opened fire on thousands of Indians gathered peacefully within a walled ground after blocking the only exit. Indians say thousands of people died in the shooting and the ensuing stampede in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar but official British figures say 379 were killed as they tried to flee. The massacre quickly became a symbol of colonial cruelty.

Reuters - Ludhiana

Bosnia warned on envoy fracas

Western governments might suspend contacts with Bosnia's ambassadors unless the Bosnian government agrees soon on a law governing ambassadorial posts, the international community's High Representative in Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, said. Bosnia's factions are at loggerheads on how ambassadorial posts should be divided among Serbs, Croats, Muslims and others.

Reuters - Sarajevo

Nigerian superstar Fela dies

Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Nigeria's Afrobeat superstar, who helped bring the continent's music to a global audience, died at 58 after weeks of illness. A star of the Nigerian and international music scene in the 1970s and 1980s, Anikulapo-Kuti, known as Fela, won a reputation for smoking marijuana, sleeping with many women and dressing only in underpants.

Reuters - Lagos

Obituary, page 14

Soros offers to meet attacker

The financier George Soros wants to meet Malaysia's Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, to discuss accusations that he attacked South-East Asian currencies for political reasons. Mr Mahathir's criticism was sparked by losses in several local currencies since coming under speculative attack in May.

Reuters - Kuala Lumpur

Foreign universities banned

A court has temporarily banned foreign universities from awarding degrees in India. The High Court asked the federal government to prohibit foreign institutions from holding classes, collecting fees or operating in India. Institutions affected include Leeds University, Durham University Business School, the University of Northumbria and the University of Western Australia.

AP - Madras

Mont Blanc toll rises to five

Rescuers recovered the bodies of four Spanish climbers, and a fifth resident of Spain died in a hospital, after falls on Mont Blanc. A German, Ulrich Cristophe Kinkel, who was climbing with a Spaniard, died of his injuries on Saturday.

AP - Aosta

Taylor takes over in Liberia

The former warlord Charles Taylor was sworn in as Liberia's president, a position he sought for seven years on the battlefield and finally achieved at the ballot-box. Two weeks after winning 75 per cent of the vote in the country's first post-war election, Mr Taylor promised to set up commissions aimed at guaranteeing human rights and promoting reconciliation.

AP - Monrovia

The great suburban sinner who has gone to ground

AMERICAN DAYS

Whenever you go visiting in the suburban suburbs of an American town or city, your hosts - town or countryfolk, it makes no difference - will sooner or later look out of the kitchen window into the seemingly endless garden, and complain about "the raccoons". They are almost always in the plural, and so are the charges levelled against them.

They ruin the garden, scrape the tree-trunks, hole the fence, pinch food off the bird-table, frighten away the song-birds, devastate the wastebins, and - worst of all - expect the already put-upon resident to clear up after them.

This predictable recital leaves me with a dilemma, for I have long harboured a city-dweller's fondness for the raccoon. This un-American attitude goes back many years to a set of newspaper photographs that showed one of these furry creatures, paws played, ringed tail extended, masked face tilted upwards, jumping from a burning house. The raccoon pondered his course of action, leapt, fell, and finally made a safe landing, a couple of dozen feet lower than where he started.

Ever since I have been a closet devotee and have acquired, almost without intending to, a small fund of raccooniana: a photo here, a drawing or postcard there, a couple of wooden ones, a passingly realistic stuffed toy.

As the years have passed, however, I have been forced to the sad, but inescapable realisation that these endearing but villainous animals are just an-



"These endearing but villainous animals are part of the American myth. In truth, they do not exist"

other component of the American myth. They belong right up there with motherhood, apple-pie and the yellow-brick road.

The truth is that they do not exist. And those who say they do are merely victims of the great US government conspiracy to make Americans feel better about themselves. I know this, because, despite all these years of devotion to the raccoon, I have never actually seen one.

In many visits to many different states, I have been stationed at other people's kitchen

windows in the pitch dark, transported to town rubbish tips at dusk and made forays from state park lodges in the early hours, all in the hope of seeing a raccoon. "You're bound to see dozens," people say encouragingly, baffled as much by my desire to see one as by my repeatedly failure.

Most recently, in a last-ditch attempt to disprove the conspiracy, I went to West Virginia's state nature reserve where specimens of indigenous wildlife are kept in semi-captivity to in-

form and delight the visiting public. Sure enough, the only enclosure to betray not a hint of its advertised occupant was the one labelled "raccoon".

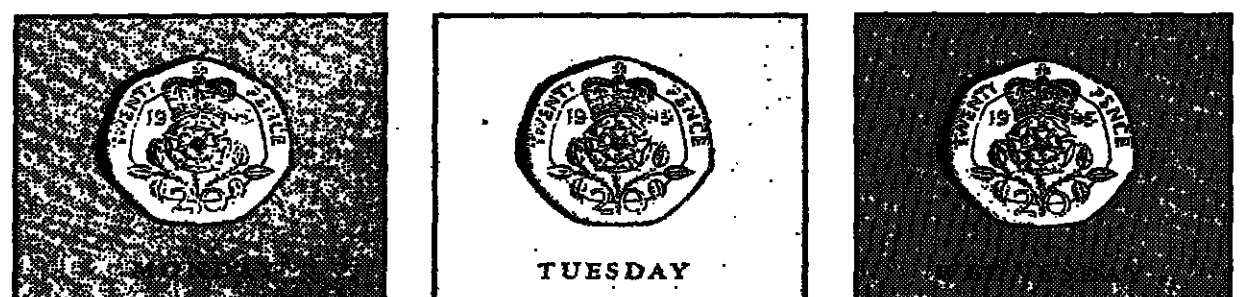
The far rarer grey wolf and black bear made an appearance. But, you object, there are raccoons all over the roads in varying stages of decay after unfortunate encounters with traffic. Don't you believe it. What are all those state troopers doing at the side of country roads if they are not waiting to strew around pseudo-raccoons out of sight of unsuspecting motorists? They are certainly not pulling over lorries for speeding.

Long ago, perhaps, a "dead" raccoon might have warned drivers about the risks of speed and the damage cars do to nature. Now, though, the troopers have no overdone their strewing that no one takes any notice. At rubbish tips, raccoons are the lax city authorities' irrefutable excuse for the unhygienic disorder that prevails.

And to my suburban hosts who complain about "the raccoons"? I'm sorry, but you must look closer to home. These mythical animals are taking the blame for indulgences shown to your cats, your dogs, your children - and for your own carelessness when taking out the trash. "The raccoons" are just the amateurishly wicked alter ego of your average American who is not always quite so orderly, clean or law-abiding as Uncle Sam expects.

If I see a raccoon, I'll let you know. But I am not counting on it any time soon.

Mary Dejevsky



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Kirov Ballet
Coliseum, London

Louise Levene

John Cusack could have been the next Tom Cruise, but he just wasn't interested. The buzz surrounding his first feature, 'Grosse Pointe Blank', suggests that he was right to stick to his guns. By Ryan Gilbey

I ask whether he has experienced that unease and restlessness about where his own life was heading? "Oh yeah." How do you deal with that? "Shoot first, ask



It's a hit, man: John Cusack in 'Grosse Pointe Blank' (left) and in 'The Sure Thing' (above)

He shrugs, letting his sentence evaporate. We talk some more about *Grosse Pointe Blank*. He tells me that it's the first complete screenplay that he has had produced. What does he mean by 'complete'?

"I'd contributed to the scripts of stuff I was working on," he says, with the half-proud, half-mischievous smirk of the school swot who's just owned up to helping his pal earn top marks in geography. "I collaborated with Cameron Crowe on my character's dialogue in *Say Anything*.

“We would take over this theatre in Chicago and put on some godawful surrealist nightmare or other,” he enthuses, his cool, carefully-paced delivery break-

Yes, he was daring in *The Griefers*, and droll as the pretentious playwright in Woody Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway*. And yes, on both occasions, Cusack watched as virtually anyone who had any connection with those films, from the caterer upwards, was nominated for Academy Awards while he – the leading man, no less – was left high and dry. Not

... and then you end up fighting John Malkovich on top of a speeding fire engine?

"Well, yeah," he laughs. "There's no getting around what it is, right?"

'Grasse Pointe Blank' is released on Friday.

Call 0930 525 737

Tomorrow in the Tabloid: Tom Lubbock on Henry Raeburn at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

هكذا من الراحل

Disappeared in a puff of smoke?



Interview

Deborah Ross

talks to

KENNETH CLARKE

Ken Clarke doesn't have an office in the Treasury any more. Or even one in the House. But he's not hard to find. Just go to the big building at Number One Parliament Street and follow the stink. "God, you can smell this is Ken's floor," I tell his secretary, Debbie, as we get out the lift. "Yes, he does like his cigars," she replies.

Then, when I enter his actual office, he looms towards me out of such a swirling, smoky smog he's like someone getting off a train in a David Lean movie, only he's not very Omar Sharif, because he's quite fat and round and not much of a sex god, frankly.

Ken, I say, I'm something of a smoker myself. (I've even worked out a way of doing it in the shower, patent pending.) But this is terrible. I ask his secretary how she bears it. "You get used to it," she says. "I warned Debbie at the start that I smoked in my office," says Ken. "Do the windows open?" asks the photographer. "Everyone at the Treasury got used to a smoky room," says Ken who, I think, is beginning to feel quite ganged-up on by now. He then says he would open a window, but is new to this office and hasn't quite worked out how.

Maastricht Treaty documents. Window engineering. Not subjects that have ever interested him greatly.

He is now just a backbench MP and, as such, had to hand back his grander offices. But he truly didn't mind, he says, and may even like this one, which is over the road from the Commons, rather better. "The rooms I had in the House were near the Speaker's chair, and people were always dropping in, and you could never get anything done. Here, you can retreat only too effectively and can even forget to go across to the Palace at all, which is no great shame."

I don't think Ken is fed up with politics. Not a bit of it. But I do think he might be fed up with recent politics. Or, as he puts it at one point: "I think if I'd had to attend one more meeting about the precise words we were going to use to describe our attitude to the single currency I'd have gone mad. MAD!"

All in all, he's been at the very heart of British government for a good 16 years, but now isn't. It must feel strange, I say. He says it feels very strange indeed but, surprisingly enough, he is finding it pleasurable. "Last night, I put down my book [George Shultz's memoirs] because I discovered *A Fish Called Wanda* was on the television. Not long ago, I wouldn't have been doing any of those things. I'd have been doing red boxes." Did he enjoy *A Fish Called Wanda*? "Oh yes. I thought it very good."

So is this what he'll be doing from now on, watching more telly? "Sorry, Chief Whip. I can't possibly come in to vote. It's my *Emmerdale* night." No, probably not. "I don't propose to semi-retire. I have a very low boredom threshold, so I get bored if I don't work properly." He's had a lot of offers from banks and suchlike, he says, which he is going to consider over the summer. He'll make a decision when he gets back. But you'll be very busy going on these 'bonding' weekends for Conservative MPs that Mr Hague has announced when you get back, won't you? So that you can relate to your colleagues better? "Humph," goes Ken.

You're not looking forward to it, then? "There's nothing wrong with the idea. I just won't be playing prank-ball myself," he says.

Poor Ken. Nothing's ultimately worked out the way he would have liked.

He's wanted to be Prime Minister since he was seven. He stood up in class at primary school and said so. He devoted his entire adult life to this end, then never even got to be leader of the party. He's not even in the Shadow Cabinet, although he could have been. "William offered me deputy leader. Had I been interested, I'd have gone on to say: deputy-leader to do what? I wouldn't have wanted to be a

John Prescott-type deputy, sent round the beaches of England."

He must, I say, be crushingly disappointed at the way things have panned out. No, he insists, he isn't. "I'm not broken hearted. It's not in my temperament. Yes, I would have liked to have been Prime Minister. And, yes, I would still like to be Prime Minister." Still? "I am only 57," he says. "And I have more political experience than anyone else in the party. Who knows what's going to happen in the next few years?"

Only to be expected I suppose. You don't get to the level he's been at for so long without being very ambitious. And people who are very ambitious don't, as a rule, suddenly stop being so. Does Ken really possess the jolly equanimity he would like us to think he does? Or is it all just front? Is he really a good bloke? Or does he just put on a good show? I think he's a bit of both, myself. But you can't dislike him for it, not least because the show is always such an engaging one. The thing about you, I later tell him, is that even though you're a Tory most people think you'd be OK to bump into down the pub.

"That's because most of them have. Ha! Ha!" he says.

Kenneth Clarke was a political animal from very early on. He was brought up in Nottingham,

'I wouldn't have wanted to be a John Prescott-type deputy, sent round the beaches of England'

the son of a man who was upwardly mobile before the phrase had even been invented. A colliery electrician, Kenneth Clarke senior went into repairing watches and ultimately ended up owning three jewellery shops.

His father, he says, was a very easy-going, sociable, popular man, whereas his mother, Doris, was a different kettle of fish altogether. In a recent biography Ken's younger brother, Michael, was quoted as saying that Doris was an alcoholic, an unhappy, temperamental woman who spent a lot of time in her bedroom drinking gin.

Ken, however, refutes this hotly. "It's just not true. My brother fantasised it all. Why? I don't know. I am not very close to him, as you have probably gathered. My mother was a much less happy character than my father. She was more tense, more nervous, more argumentative and had fewer friends. And perhaps, after we left home, she did drink more than was good for her... but not an alcoholic, no." Does he think she was a depressive then? "She was just quite complicated." Did she ever receive psychiatric help? "Not that I can recall, no."

Whatever, Kenneth junior was exceptionally clever. He could read well before school age. At school, he was always top in pretty much everything.

However, his parents being bright but not well-educated, there were never any books about the place. So, instead, he took to reading the *Daily Mail* from front to back every day. At an age when you and I were still pushing peas up our noses, he could tell you who was in the Cabinet and what bills were due to be heard.

At 11, he won a scholarship to a public school, then went on to Cambridge to study law. Here, he formed up his political beliefs - became chairman of the Cambridge Conservative Association and all that - and met Gillian, his wife-to-be. He thinks they met at a barbecue held on Midsummer Common. He thinks they might have gone "to something French and grainy at the cinema" on their first date. He can't remember exactly. Ken's never much cared for detail. He's always been a doer, not a thinker. Whenever his driver used to ask him which boxes



Master showman, Ken Clarke: 'I would still like to be Prime Minister. Who knows what's going to happen in the next few years?' Glynn Griffiths

he wanted to take home that night, he would say: "Oh, any two." He never read the Maastricht Treaty because he couldn't be bothered. He was always a quick master of briefs, but never a diligent one.

Gillian Clarke is a medieval historian who is very clever, by all accounts. Anyway, I tell him she has always struck me as a fabulous sort. Unlike other minister's wives, she's never gone in for the John Frieda hair-dos and little Windsmoor or Jaeger suits, has she? No, she most certainly hasn't, he cries. "She doesn't dye her hair. She's not interested in clothes. If she came down one morning in haute couture, I would be seriously worried about her." Neither, he continues, have ever succumbed to any of that *Colour Me Beautiful* nonsense. "During the election I was accused of having been to see an image consultant because my hair looked different. Well, the only thing different about it was that I'd washed it."

Anyway, he was first elected an MP in 1970, when he must have thought: "Right, I'm on my way to being PM now." Although, of course, he wasn't. He wasn't even on his way to leading the party, although it hasn't been much of a party to lead as of late, has it? Unfortunately, he can't argue with that, he says. It was, he reckons, Mar-

garet's departure followed by the Danish referendum and then Black Wednesday which did them in. "The Euroscepticism, which had previously been quite subdued, suddenly leapt into life. The Eurosceptic revolt destroyed the Government." He could, he says, well understand Labour's victory.

Trouble is, we're all going to come to regret it, or so he insists: "I like Tony Blair. I rate him. I think he's very able. But I tell my European friends, 'don't expect any heroics from Tony Blair.' I don't know what he's going to be like when the going gets tough. Gordon has already taken some tough decisions, yes. But, unfortunately, they were the wrong decisions."

How did he rate John Major? I ask. "He had all the qualities of charm and likability and being human, but no luck. He really was the unluckiest PM this century. How could we have predicted cows suddenly getting this bizarre disease?" Or the Hamiltons turning out to be not only a disgrace, but a whinnying disgrace. "I think they were, perhaps, a little noisier than was wise." Or Jonathan Aitken doing what he did? "I know him well. I like him. But I don't for the life of me understand what he thought he was doing."

With regard to the leadership contest, I say what

I think many people believe, that he probably talked a good game right up until his Faustian pact with John Redwood, a pact that looked the opposite of wise.

Wise didn't come into it, he replies. "Firstly, it was essential. I was only two votes ahead at the end of the second ballot. The decision was in the hands of the 36 Redwood supporters."

But, even if you'd pulled it off, you and John couldn't have seriously made it work, could you? "Yes! Yes! We could have. We didn't need to do anything other than agree that the single currency was an open question. We both believed we could reunite the party. But then his supporters took off. Apart from Teresa Gorman. She voted for me and wrote me a nice note afterwards." Have he and Gillian had her round to supper yet, as a way of saying thanks? "Ah. No."

Ken and Gillian are off to California for the summer. She likes botany. He likes bird-watching. They'll travel about a bit, stopping in places which give "good botany and good birds."

Ah, I say, so you like the wife to scabble about in shrubs at your feet while you gaze importantly into the sky? "Precisely," he whoops, well-pleased. Is Ken just a showman? Perhaps. But it's a terrific show.

Road rage and lawnmower theft deep in Iowa

Iowa is one of those places that makes people laugh even if they haven't been there. I can understand this. I mean I was born there and have always felt immensely grateful that my parents decided to move around the same time as the doctor cut the umbilical cord. Still it does seem strange that people in England who probably do not even know that Iowa is a state in the American Midwest find it so funny when I say I am planning a visit. "Why?" they hoot and try to change the subject.

I refuse to do this. The latest therapy word to invade the American language is "closure" and I know that my Iowa conversation is nowhere near that point yet. "To see my grandmother." I say. This stops the conversation dead and there is a moment in which everyone lowers their eyes. I think they are waiting for me to admit that I am lying, that I have invented this grandmother in a sad attempt to shave a few years off my age. I'm sure they are thinking: "Why can't she just have a little eye-bag surgery like everyone else?"

In fact, my grandmother's existence sometimes

does seem a little unreal even to me. Part of this is that there has always been at least 1,000 miles between us and also that Iowa itself can seem pretty unreal (even if you were born there). For instance, the entire state is laid out on a grid plan and so it is not unusual to come across, say, 159th street in the middle of nowhere. I was last in Iowa five years ago for my grandmother's 90th birthday and drove straight (and I do mean straight) across the state, listening to the radio. The big news item of the day was a roadside lawnmower theft. "If you know anything about this, please do contact the police," the announcer emphasised before breaking off for that day's recipe.

This time I drove north, following the Mississippi River, through a green Grant Wood landscape, and tried to imagine what the place looked like in my grandmother's mind. She is now 95 and was born and raised, courted and married here. She lived through the Depression and two world wars and had four children, 12 grandchildren and even more great-grandchildren. It's been a good life and I suspect (though she would never say) that she has been waiting to die for some time.



Ann Treneman

Seeing her was a shock, not because she has changed but because the older she gets the younger I feel. She is tiny, ultra-feminine and sharp as a tack. Next to her I am suddenly a hulking teenager. I certainly am not a single mother of two who is in

charge of everything from packed lunches to negotiate equity. "Drink your milk up!" my grandmother exclaims over lunch and for a moment I feel exactly like my teenage daughter must when I say the same thing to her.

Isn't it strange how little we know about our own families? I spend my life interviewing other people and yet I know only snippets of my own grandmother's long life. Now I know a bit more because she has written up some of her memories. They start, as she did, in 1902. "My father was a farmer, he loved the prairie. His favourite flower was the goldenrod. My mother was a dressmaker and a musician." Her childhood was another world: a place of barefoot summers and of catching frogs, a time when you got one present at Christmas and grandparents came to visit in a one-horse shay and used a buffalo robe to keep out the cold.

When she was five she and her sister were walking the one mile home from school one day when the strangest contraption came down the road. "We ran into the cornfield, hid ourselves and watched, in awe. This was the first time I saw an auto." There

was a family cow, hundreds of chickens and a barrel of butchered hog on the back porch for the long winter. "When mother wanted some meat, she would have to take a pick, pry the meat loose, thaw it out." She writes of hitching up the horse to go to her high school graduation in the middle of a scarlet fever outbreak and of the curfews and fruit punch parties of teaching college. At 19 she took her first job in a one-room country schoolhouse. So far the memoirs stop at 1924 and I can only hope for more.

I look over at her as we drive to dinner. Could she get any lighter? In comparison, the car door seems impossibly heavy. She is unsteady on her feet and perhaps one day she will just float away. I am thinking these thoughts as we sit in a car park, waiting for another car to move. "Oh, honk your horn. Honk! This is ridiculous," she fumes. Road rage in deepest Iowa seems a little unreal, but then again, so does being a granddaughter. Thank god that car moved and I didn't have to honk.

Dinah Hall is on holiday

the leader page

The problem with Parliament...

The week when politicians go on their no doubt richly deserved summer holidays is just the week to take a look at how well we are served by the Palace of Westminster. Why? Because the judgments of politicians themselves on the matter are very often worst of all: better for us to discuss the subject quietly, in their collective absence, and hope that they can be persuaded when they return to view their ingrown world from the outside.

Here are a couple of cases in point. Ann Taylor, Labour's Leader of the Commons, told yesterday's *Sunday Telegraph* that she thinks possible reforms to Commons procedure might include swipe card voting, time allocations, and - wait for it - applause for speeches and well-made points.

Swipe cards, and better organised debating time, more socially amenable hours, and so on, are all welcome improvements in their way. But happy clappy Commons? No. Up with that we should not put. Ms Taylor was a little hesitant, admitting that too much clapping might not be a good idea: which means, presumably, that the whips would advise MPs in advance of those occasions when spontaneous outbursts are appropriate.

All this nonsense stems from a large crowd of new New Labour MPs coming in and feeling frustrated that they are not allowed to leap about and cheer when Mr Blair arrives at the

despatch box, as if Noel and Liam have just walked on stage, but must instead wave their order papers and shout "hear, hear". Well, they need to learn that the Commons is neither a political rally, nor a pop concert, even though they might enjoy either of those alternatives more. It is a debating chamber, and to the extent that the rules keep it that way, the rules should be kept.

Then up pops the cheerful visage of the Conservative leader with more nonsense, this time of the Opposition variety. He alleges that New Labour is a "control freak" government which is in danger of "marginalising" Parliament. In fact, the problem is so serious that it poses a long-term threat to the health of our democracy.

William Hague's evidence for this malign cancer, already rotting away our body politic before it has even had a chance to do a spot of post-election sunbathing, is that the new government is over-using the guillotine (cutting short debate on Bills), reducing Question Time, and talking to people in focus groups outside the House. Now Mr Hague is a young man, but not so young that he cannot recall that the Tories were recently in power for a very long time, and were superbly well practised in all the arts of trampling on Parliament's sensibilities, abusing executive power, ignoring the real wishes of the populace, dismiss-



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sively mistreating their own back-benchers, and regarding the official Opposition as beneath contempt and not really worth bothering to answer at all.

Indeed, some might say that the Thatcher government was especially prone to presuming itself a one-party state. Two words are a complete answer to Tory complaints that Parliament is being ignored, and democracy at risk: the words are "poll", and "tax", in that order. Frankly, if Mrs Thatcher had had the wit to attend the odd focus group or two she might have learnt something about what people

really thought about her version of democracy - but then, that phase of Tory government was concerned with vanguardism, which is famously not very interested in what the people feel, only what they can be made to do. It might also be worth recalling that every major social Bill in that parliament was guillotined, along with all the major public utility privatisations. In fact this government is being rather fairer with the guillotine, by announcing well in advance when it intends to use it, which was not the Tory practice.

No - the real problem lies somewhere between Mr Hague's confected

indignation and the inevitable shock of new Labour MPs discovering that Parliament was not created yesterday. The real problem with Parliament is that no one in this government seems able to articulate quite what it's for, other than to keep telling Labour MPs to be "disciplined", and berate anyone who declines to sign up to New Dawn optimism.

So far as the Commons is concerned, a lot of this agonising is merely the consequence of Labour winning such a dominant majority. But the truth is that Parliament does have a problem, and it is the other house - the House of Lords. Mr Blair swung a few friendly faces from among his business world friends into ermine only last Friday. Funny, really, when you think that New Labour is supposed to be in favour of democratising the second chamber. Or is it? The truth is, apart from being opposed to the hereditary principle, no one really knows what Mr Blair intends to do with the Lords. We are told that he is lining up working peers ready to prevent the hereditary Tories from frustrating any central part of his programme. Fine - but surely that cannot be it? Were we not promised more radical reform? What shape might it take? The answer is important, because it will tell us how open Blairism really is to having its policies more or less objectively scrutinised and revised in a separate cham-

ber, and not by placemen, either. Who knows what the people think about updating incidental Commons procedures? Probably they barely care. But we should not clap this government too loudly until we see it start to modernise the parliamentary system itself.

Draw your own conclusions

Is this another triumph for the "my seven-year-old could do better" school of art criticism? Most of Van Gogh's paintings may be fakes, half the famous pictures in the world turn out not to be by the attributed artist, and now we come across the phenomenon of Renaissance denial. The Renaissance, it seems, did not happen when and where we thought it did. Sure, a bunch of Italians got the hang of perspective and drawing realistic people around 1300, but it wasn't Giotto who started it all with the Assisi frescoes. Or so says Bruno Zanardi, the restorer who has worked on them for the past 10 years. He says they were painted by three other artists who learned their craft in Rome, not Florence. This is a big historical debunking job, if true, and the arguments are persuasive. So, if you're headed for Tuscany, learn these names: Cavallini, Rusuti and Torriti.

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Radio 3 sharpens its schedule

Sir: The proposals which the Controller of Radio 3 and his team announced last month are just that: proposals, which are currently the subject of discussion with programme producers around the country. From these discussions and the programme offers that are received during the autumn will come the final programmes which will be communicated to the listeners with all the means at our disposal.

Behind the proposals, and James Boyle's proposals for Radio 4 ("It's a longer Today for you and your Radio 4 listeners", 31 July) lies a thorough and meticulous review of BBC Radio which started last autumn. The basis of that review was the views of our listeners, our programme makers and a sophisticated understanding of the changes in society which affect how people listen to radio.

Our commitment to Radio 3 as a provider of classical music in a rich cultural context is unchanged, as is the commitment to over half its music output being live or specially recorded. We entirely agree with Bayan Northcott (Tabloid: "Core values", 1 August) that Radio 3 is vital "as a funder of orchestras, as a commissioner of new works, as a major focus and patron of the classical music life of this country". It will remain so for the future.

But Radio 3 listeners themselves tell us that its schedule does not always match their listening requirements and, despite some changes, it is still difficult for them to know when to find the programmes they want. Radio 3 is entirely right in wanting to clarify and sharpen its schedule, so that both existing and potential listeners can find their way around it more easily. I am confident that the developments Radio 3 has proposed will enable the network to have a continuing, central place in the cultural life of the UK. MATTHEW BANNISTER
Director BBC Radio 3
London W1

Sir: Further to Bayan Northcott's article "Core values" (1 August), listening to classical music is one of the greatest pleasures in my life. But, as one who has received no formal music education, I am aware that my appreciation of the full riches of music is severely limited by a lack of technical knowledge of instruments and playing techniques, and of composition in all its aspects.

My interest in classical music owes a great deal to Antony Hopkins's programme "Listening to Music": I was strongly reminded of the role of such informal presentations in educating, inspiring and eventually "capturing" naive listeners, by a recent thrilling dissection and re-assembly of *Petrushka* on Radio 3. So, Nicholas Kenyon, please remember that access without exposition is a lost cause. FRANK FAHY
Southampton, Hampshire

Sir: Apropos of Bayan Northcott's article about Radio 3 there are many of us who have been suffering from a hidden agenda for years, and I don't mean merely shifting "Composer of the Week" from its traditional slot to a time when honourable men are about their lawful affairs.

I am referring to composers who do not conform to the joint



prejudices of the BBC music establishment, and in the absence of competent management, highly developed skills of self-promotion, or an international reputation, never get a hearing on the air, the only way a composer can make a career in this country. Effectively the BBC is the sole custodian of contemporary music and, as the beneficiary of public funds, it has a duty to the public of which it is in total dereliction. JAMES STEVENS
Composer
London NW7

Scrutiny of police deaths

Sir: I am somewhat surprised at Raju Bhatt's attack on the way in which the deaths of Shiji Lapite and Richard O'Brien were investigated ("Death in custody defeat for Mills", 29 July).

Mr Bhatt called for His Honour Gerald Butler QC to examine the quality of the information that the Crown Prosecution Service receives from the police. I am not afraid of scrutiny. I believe that the quality of investigations, which we supervise, is very high. The quality of the investigation was never questioned during the inquests into the deaths of Shiji Lapite or Richard O'Brien or in the recent affidavits to the High Court.

As Andreas Whittam-Smith acknowledged ("There can be no hiding places for corrupt police", 3 August), the Authority is a force for change. Throughout our 12 years of existence we have pressed for many changes to the police complaints system but have always

emphasised that in the majority of cases the standard of investigation is high. Death in custody investigations are invariably supervised by a member of this independent authority. PETER MOORHOUSE
Chairman
Police Complaints Authority
London SW1

PVC: no place in the future

Sir: I write to address some of the points made by Francis Evans regarding the toxicity of PVC, a material proposed for the Millennium Dome (Letters, 30 July).

The Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) are not the only organisation to compare PVC with other materials. A far more authoritative comparative study published by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency found a number of alternatives to be preferable after considering the full PVC life-cycle. Their conclusions were based upon considerations of not only the parent material but of the additives commonly used in the final products.

There are well-founded concerns about the use of PVC in blood transfusion products because of the release of phthalate plasticisers; the phthalate DINP that Mr Evans describes as "safe" has a wide range of potential adverse effects. It consequently carries warning

labelling requirements under the EU Hazardous Substance Directive. Indeed, concerns about the possible toxic effects of phthalates in general have led the Danish government to initiate moves to phase out the use of such PVC.

The CSIRO report and Professor Christopher Rappe consider only emissions of dioxins to the atmosphere. PVC manufacture generates dioxins predominantly in solid process wastes. Much evidence suggests that the presence of PVC in feedstocks may also be responsible for the substantial dioxin emissions known to result from waste disposal/incineration processes and from scrap metal smelting.

Every assertion that PVC is harmless can be counterbalanced by legitimate concerns, supported by scientific evidence. Generation of dioxin-contaminated wastes, the use of toxic additives, toxic fumes produced in fires, lack of recyclability: all these considerations contributed to the decision by the Austrian Supreme Court to uphold Greenpeace's right to describe PVC as an "environmental poison", in the face of strenuous objections by PVC manufacturing concerns.

Francis Evans' defence of his product is quite understandable, but the environment in the next millennium would be better served by recognition that PVC can play no part in the sustainable society envisioned for the future. RUTH STRINGER
Greenpeace Research Laboratories
Exeter, Devon

Saddled with a son's debt

Sir: I share Agnes Carrey's sentiments (Tabloid: "The cost of Dearing", 31 July).

My heart sinks as I think of our financial future. My husband is a vicar and I work part-time at our local supermarket. This way we make ends meet and consider we have a reasonable standard of living.

We currently have one child still at school (our daughter earns her living as a dental nurse) and he will almost certainly be worthy of a place at university in due course. How can we sit back and watch our son saddle himself with a debt of maybe £12,000 in order to go through university? We strive to keep out of debt. My husband was only ordained after declaring that he had no outstanding debts - a legal requirement.

It is a truly terrible thing to owe money without any certain means of repaying it, and to legislate so that this becomes the expectation of our young people is, to my mind, ethically wrong.

I know that we shall be able to make little financial difference to our son's debt load if he goes to university. He should go - he is gifted and will have a real contribution to make in his generation.

But at what price? Mrs VIVIANE LEYLAND
Willenhall,
West Midlands

Catholics learn by experience

Sir: Andrew Brown's article, "A hypocritical church desperate for priests" (2 August), may describe the Catholic diocese of Dallas at some time in the past. But his claim that the Catholic Church as a whole is "not facing facts" seems unfair.

The typical British Catholic diocese where I worked in clergy selection for 40 years always took the greatest care in selecting candidates for training. We made detailed enquiries about the background of each candidate, more especially those who applied later in life. In recent years, we introduced psychological screening of each applicant. On occasion, we would not ordain a student if we were uncertain about his suitability. Moreover, even if it meant that we would have insufficient priests for future years, we were never "prepared to take almost anyone on board". The fact that every Catholic diocese in Britain is, and will be, short of priests shows how unlikely it is that we were alone in taking this care over selection and ordination.

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have certainly faced the facts. Once child abuse by clergy began to be discovered elsewhere, we started work on our common policy which, amongst other things, involves each diocese working closely with the local child protection units. Far from not facing the facts, we have shown ourselves to be always ready to learn by experience.

HUGH LINDSAY
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle
(1974-1992)
Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria

Making mischief with Africa

Sir: Typical. Attempts are being made yet again to link Africa with a disease which first appeared outside the continent (report, 1 August).

I disagree with your claim that the origins of BSE may be found in herds of the African plains. Curiously enough you never demonstrated that the African animals in question actually had the disease; only that they can catch it. Therefore your conclusion that the origin of BSE may lie in the import of meat and bonemeal from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana between 1970 and 1980 remains questionable.

We await publication of detailed statistics of the number of people suffering from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the African countries in question. Until that and other evidence are collected, associating Africa with BSE would seem at best mischievous. NUMO NOTSE AMARTEY
Director
The African Foundation
London E5

Sir: The unpleasant little box on your front page (1 August) outlining dread diseases which originated in Africa verges on the racist, although admittedly Africa was the source of the single greatest threat to the future of the planet, *Homo sapiens*. TIMOTHY BLAKE
London W4

Good natured Mr Lawrence

Sir: Grateful though I am for Polly Toynbee's kind words ("The committee wakes - to loud debate, we hope", 31 July), I think she has been most unfair to my predecessor as Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Ivan Lawrence.

He is neither "florid in complexion" nor "limited in brain". On the contrary, as friend and foe alike will acknowledge, he has a very sharp intellect, an enormous capacity for work, an excellent sense of humour and is remarkably good natured.

We didn't always see eye to eye, but I certainly respected him. CHRIS MULLIN MP
(Sunderland South, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Rising price of fridges

Sir: The Government's pronouncements on the price of electrical goods will not make a ha'porth of difference to the consumer ("Consumers win in the price wars", 31 July).

We have been wanting to replace our 20-year old German fridge-freezer, but have been putting off the expenditure while it still works in the hope that the strong pound would bring the price down.

Today my wife happened to call at the retailer from whom we intended to buy its replacement, also German and, incidentally, hardly changed in its design. She bought it there and then. Because tomorrow the price is going not down but up, by about 12.5 per cent - a natural free-market response to demand, one suspects. B J NORTON
Cobham,
Surrey

A New Deal, but old money, for Lone Parents

Five-year-old James is careering around the place, swivelling at the Employment Services staff, running off with a clutch of official papers. The jobcentre is not used to rowdy children - but now they have become a permanent feature.

For two weeks now Harriet Harman's New Deal for Lone Parents has been up and running at eight local centres. This is Cardiff, and James's mother is here to talk about work. The following letter landed on her doormat unexpectedly a week ago: "Dear Janet Hayes, I am your Personal Adviser for a new service - the New Deal for Lone Parents. I am writing to you as your youngest child is now at school. I will offer you help and advice to find a job. Getting a job really does offer a better future for you and your children, and I am here to help you get one..."

Janet began claiming income support a year ago when she broke up, violently, with James's father, turning up penniless at a women's refuge. Sitting down with her new adviser at the computer, together they calculate how much she would end up with if she took a job. Like most other new arrivals here, she has no idea what she'd get on Family Credit. It's a fiendishly complicated sum - hardly surprising that those on benefit haven't a clue, lost in a maze of bureaucracy that even has the staff baffled sometimes. Family Credit is the benefit that tops up the income of low earners, to ensure it's always worth their while to take even a low-paid job, rather than staying unemployed on Income Support.

The computer says that if she got a job for 25 hours a week at £3.75 an hour, Janet would be £45.50 a week better off than she is now. She is astonished and delighted. "I thought I'd be maybe £15 better off, not worth it really. That's what everyone says. I never expected it to work out like this." The word-of-mouth among single mothers about work is pretty negative, something the New Deal team hopes will change as more mothers come in and spread a different word.

Everyone in this office wanted to work on the New Deal and a missionary zeal gleams in their eyes. "I'm so enthusiastic about it, I bore everyone rigid!" Linda Badman, the project manager says. "People come in and you can change their lives. It's marvellous, it really is." Today they are celebrating their first client's first day at work, only nine days since they sent out the letters.

There are 4,000 single mothers with school age children in this area - half a million nationwide. Letters have gone out to the first 10 per cent randomly selected, but they are not obliged to respond, for this is voluntary. The manager reckons some 20 per cent of these have answered so far. She wonders how to reach the non-responders, and is sending out her advisers to proselytize in local communities. "If only we can reach them to explain what's on offer - training courses and plenty of jobs. We can help to find child care, tell them about the child care disregard amount and how it works."

Next in was Edith, a nervous middle-aged Irish woman, trembling like a leaf. Her youngest child was now 14, and when she got the letter she thought she was in trouble. "I took one look at it and it gave me such a fright, I put it aside," she said. Like most other benefit claimants, she had only the vaguest idea of the rules.

Her adviser reassured her she was under no obligation to work: lone parents are not registered unemployed or designated as Job Seekers. Years ago, Edith says, she used to be a care assistant in an old people's home and she liked it a lot - no shortage of jobs there.



Polly Toynbee

Most single mothers are lonely and do want jobs, but the financial incentives are not good enough

When the calculation was made, she found she'd be £50 better off for a 40-hour week and she was amazed. "I thought it'd only be around £10 above my benefit," she said. "I'll be skipping down the road when I get out of this place. I always really liked work so there'll be no stopping me now!" It may not be much per hour, but since her child was older and she liked the work, another £50 seemed to her well worthwhile. She left Linda and the other advisers beaming from ear to ear.

All this seems too good to be true. And in a sense it is. For the next client brought with her a draft of a letter to cool the enthusiasm. Maggie was bright, energetic and liked working. She'd been in and out of jobs over the last six years since her son was born. "Oh, I know all about Family Credit because I've been on it before, so I know how the sums work out," she said. She can only work 25 hours a week, as she doesn't want anyone else collecting her son from school.

She has a high rent and lives several miles out, so bus fares are expensive. On Family Credit her child gets no free school meals, so that's another £5.50 to find, plus her own lunches at work. She'd also have to pay her council tax. So although the figures look good on paper at first, from her experience of the real cost of working she reckons she'd only end up with about £25 more for her 25 hours: £1 an hour doesn't look as enticing to her as it did to Edith. What's more, the Chancellor implemented a particularly savage, self-defeating cut when he axed the Lone Parent Benefit. As from next April, all these calculations will be minus another £6 - which hardly helps the New Deal. Some mothers may drop out of jobs they dislike when they discover what Maggie has already found about the extra costs of work.

Money, though, is not the whole story. Maggie said she still wanted to work, so long as it was a job she really enjoyed: her last one had been hell. "I want to get out of the house," she said and left with a sheaf of details for jobs she might like. Most single mothers are lonely and do want jobs. If they can only get some maintenance from their child's father, the sums suddenly look very much rosier.

As it is, the current financial incentives are not good enough. Everything to do with benefit calculation is a nightmare of complexity: myriad benefits, each designed to act as a spur to this or that desired behaviour, are wasted, since virtually no one understands them. Even here, where the advisers are exceptionally good, no one could quite explain how the child care disregard worked. The DSS head office scuttled away perplexed to try to find out when I phoned, as confused as the rest.

Suffice to say that disregards are very complicated, so that when they say there's a £60 disregard for child care for working single mothers, that is not £60 in their hand to spend, but only a maximum of £42. (No, don't ask.) Family Credit itself is a niggardly benefit, which is rapidly withdrawn as you earn more. It urgently needs to be made far more generous - if, that is, we seriously intend to give more money to the poor.

Nonetheless, the New Deal is going have a terrific galvanising effect on thousands of single parents, neglected until now. It is a project that is all carrot and no stick. Mothers expressed astonished gratitude that so much help was available. It left me wondering whether welfare to work for young people would engender a similar rush of grateful enthusiasm if it were to adopt this voluntary principle. The New Deal may prove that good word-of-mouth is a lot more effective than a resented big stick.

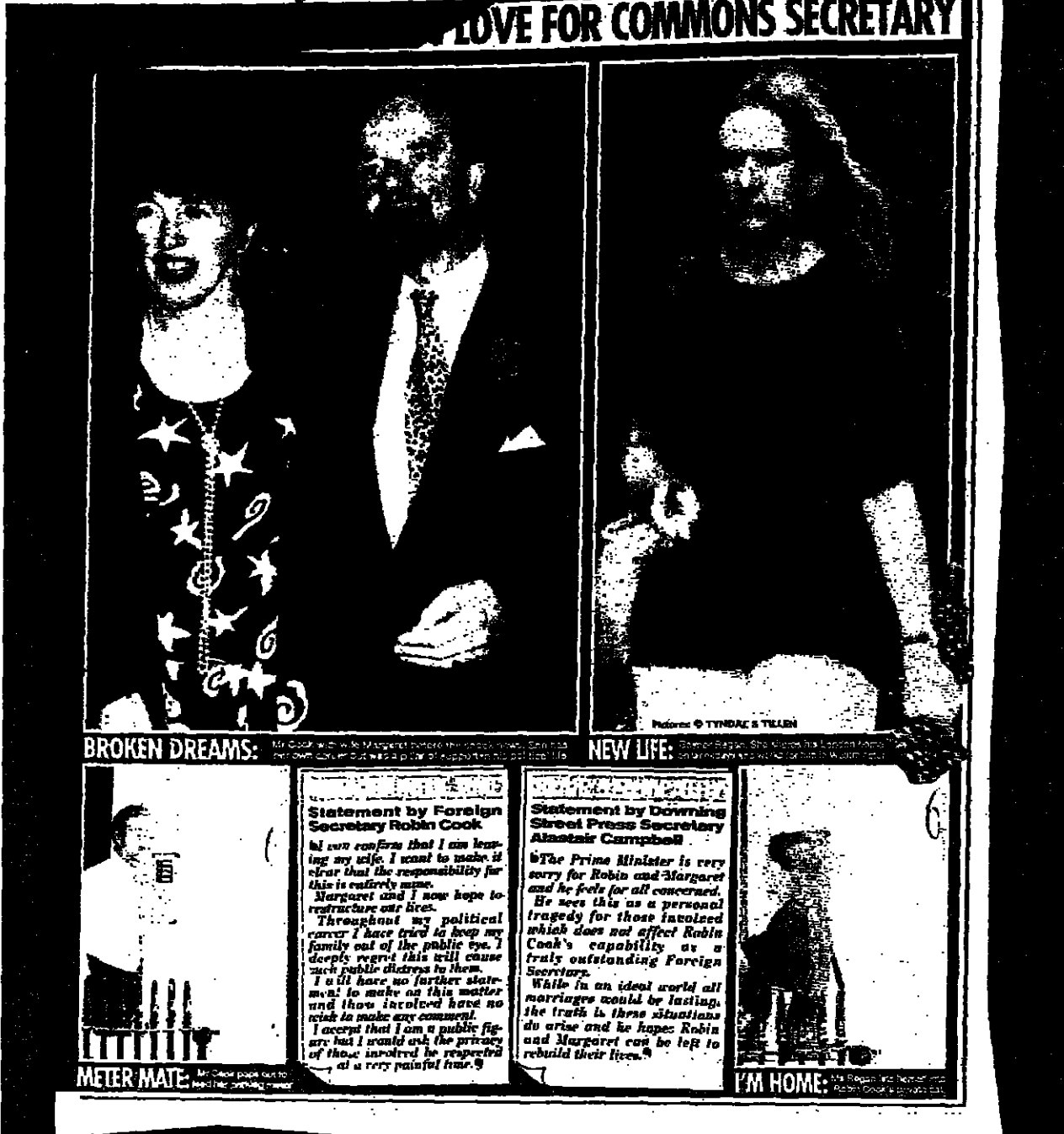
Not all that interests is of 'public interest'

by John Rentoul

Of course there is a "public interest" argument for publishing the fact of Robin Cook's affair with his assistant: the public are interested. Let us admit that we are intrigued by the fact that the Foreign Secretary is leaving his wife and that we want (within limits) to know more. But is it a scandal? Do we have a right to know because Mr Cook has done something wrong? Of course not.

Not even the *News of the World*, which specialises in lame excuses for its prurience, could dream one up this time. With David Mellor's affair with Antonia de Sancha it was that the then Secretary of State for National Heritage would be "too tired" to perform his ministerial duties. But with Mr Cook its leader-writer simply gave up. "This is not an occasion to question Mr Cook's suitability to perform as Foreign Secretary - a job he is doing with distinction," the paper opines. So why is the story important enough for the front page? Because it was "unwise" of Mr Cook to "pursue a clandestine affair" when he must have known his conduct - "private and public" - would be subjected to a "high degree of scrutiny" (especially by the *News of the World*). Besides, there had been "rumours" about his private life. Which "does leave a question mark over his handling of a problem that was bound to become public in the fullness of time." It does no such thing: all it does is ask again a familiar series of questions about the responsibilities of the press, the right of privacy and the morals of public figures.

But just because they are familiar, does not mean they are easy to answer. It was interesting, for example, that the *News of the World* made no attempt to justify printing pictures of Gwyneth Paltrow, Mr Cook's



Revealed: How the 'News of the World' chose to present its scoop to an interested public

being hostile to lone parents and censorious about marital breakdown, but it was populist rather than reactionary. Most people in this country, including most lone parents, would probably agree that two caring parents would be better than one; but they recognise that the ideal is not always possible and that it can be difficult, if not impossible, to apportion blame.

Mr Blair has always been resolutely unjudgemental about individual circumstances. "While in an ideal world all marriages would be lasting, the truth is these situations do arise," said a Downing Street statement yesterday.

Where the Conservatives got into trouble was with their own grassroots traditionalists, who took "Back to Basics" to mean all sorts of things not intended by John Major, himself a tolerant liberal whose views on such matters are hard to distinguish from Mr Blair's. Even Margaret Thatcher herself, who had married a divorced man, was never as personally censorious as painted. But she had been forced to make her favourite, Cecil Parkinson, resign because he had behaved badly. The fact that he fathered a child by his Commons assistant and then abandoned her had not necessarily made him a bad Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr Cook has not behaved badly. His sons are grown up. And he did the right thing in speaking to the cameras rather than issuing a written statement and providing awkward footage of his dash from front door to car door. Which raises the question of media harassment. Of course, in Mr Blair's "ideal world", it would have been better if Mr and Mrs Cook could have made a quiet announcement of their separation at a time of their choosing, rather than be forced into distressing private conversations because freelance photographers had been hanging around outside a Pimlico flat. And it would have been better if it had been reported factually and soberly - although BBC Radio went too far in re-litigating

it to the eighth item and not mentioning Ms Regan.

But this does not constitute a case for a law of privacy for public figures. It would be wrong for journalists to be forbidden to report that the Foreign Secretary was having an affair with his secretary, just because he wanted it kept secret. Last week the Lord Chancellor, Derry Irvine, dropped an interesting hint. He suggested that it would be better for Parliament to debate the issue and pass a Privacy Act, rather than allow judges to make up the law as they interpreted the European Convention on Human Rights. But if Parliament lays down the law, there will be a strong temptation for MPs to protect themselves. This might distract from the fact that there is a case for a privacy law to protect so-called "ordinary" citizens from some of the excesses of the tabloid press, or at least to redress the awesome imbalance of power between them.

But, in yesterday's case, while we may not approve of what the *News of the World* has done, we have to concede its right to do it.

Am I hallucinating? This is a dream job

Last week the Government finally made clear what they were looking for in a drugs czar - an "exceptional" individual with strong powers of influence and the ability to communicate with people. To be honest I haven't seen a job which would suit me more since I replied to the newspaper advertisement looking for MIs agents (They turned me down unfortunately - I told them my real age and they agreed with Oscar Wilde that a woman who would tell you that could never be trusted).

Loads of people were put off because they thought William Burroughs would inevitably get it but then I was attracted to the perks of the job - direct access to the Prime Minister, organising drugs policy and a salary to be negotiated dependent on your qualifications (reading between the lines, it's presumably how much your habit costs you per week). And, of course, on the status front a drugs czar is always going to be one step up from a drugs baron, isn't she?

But, quite, qualifications would persuade the Government to let me become the drugs czar? My ability to recite *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* faithfully? My Janis Joplin hairstyle? My little shrine to Jimi Hendrix? In the end I couldn't fit all my CV on the king-sized Rizla but I sent it off anyway and hoped for the best.

It seemed the competition was going to be pretty tough. Waiting for my interview, I ended up squashed between Will Self and Sherlock Holmes, which wasn't pleasant but the only other free seat was next to Pablo Escobar and not even Timothy Leary really fancied that.

A harassed-looking woman put her head round the door. "Sorry we're running slightly late - I don't quite know where the time's gone. Does anyone have a problem?"

I put up my hand. "Yes. Would Sir Walter Raleigh please put out that filthy pipe? Some of us can hardly breathe in here," I said.

"I don't quite see what the point of discovering tobacco is if you can't smoke it in peace. Honestly the politically correct lobby are everywhere these days," grumbled Raleigh, withdrawing to a corner to try to speak to an incoherent Hunter S Thompson. Then Noel and Liam Gallagher



Glenda Cooper

started fighting again and Keith Richards had to break it up. Someone began singing *Ebenezer Goode* out loud but stopped abruptly when Pablo remarked it gave him a headache. "So what qualities do you think you could bring to the job?" I asked, turning to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was ostentatiously flicking through his own collected works. "Extensive knowledge of the drugs

field," he said loftily. "And I would fall into the category of being both heavyweight and high profile."

"Well if you ask me, it would be better if the man from Porlock had disturbed you 10 minutes earlier and we hadn't had to listen any of that boring *Kubla Khan* rubbish at all," said Thomas De Quincey rather nastily. "What on earth were you on the day you carried on droning about that blasted albatross?"

Coleridge stuck his tongue out and retired in a huff, not even allowing Bob Marley to calm him down with a quick slip.

"If anyone knows how to solve a complex problem with a co-ordinated approach, it would be one of the most famous detectives of all time," butted in Sherlock Holmes, who then sneezed all over me for the fifth time. I silently passed him a hanky.

"I think I just like this idea of reporting directly to the Prime Minister," I said. "It gives one a real feeling of power." Will Self turned pale at those words and bolted off to the loo yet again. Poor boy, he must have been really nervous.

Bill Clinton walked out. "I'm sorry Mr President," said the harassed woman. "But we did specify that we are looking for people who have direct experience of the drugs field."

She called me in. "And what attracts you to the role of drugs czar?" said one of the board.

"Well," I replied. "I think I'd begin by focusing more on the Czarina side. I presume you are looking for someone with the ability to think they're divine, to live in luxury while thousands of peasants starve around them, and to have no idea that an October revolution is about to take place. Oh, and I've got a real thing about monks..."

"Well, we're really more interested in how you'd stop people taking drugs," interrupted another.

"You want me to stop people taking drugs?" I repeated stupefied. "But why call it a 'drugs czar'?" Then light dawned. "I get it. You want lots of ineffectual statements which no one takes any notice of and I'll carry the can at the end of the day. Just don't call me Anastasia, OK?"

The door opened and a downcast Miles Kingston is on holiday.

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William Burroughs

It may be some time before the literary reputation of William Burroughs finds its proper place in the 20th-century pantheon of creative writers.

As a writer Burroughs was above all an artist endowed with prophetic powers, much influenced by the visual arts, especially through his association with Brion Gysin, a one-time member of the original surrealist group of painters, who died in 1966. From Gysin, Burroughs developed the concept of fold-in and cut-up writing, whereby the random putting-together of lines by the author with lines from selected texts by others and chance newspaper cuttings would bring a totally new text into existence. This would then be consciously edited until the author was satisfied with the result.

Like Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, Burroughs experimented with what chance brought together and genuinely believed that in this way he could make things happen in life through magic. He cited a plane crash that he had exactly described in a text written at the time it happened.

In the late 1940s, Burroughs joined up with the poets who later became known as "Beat" - Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Harold Norse and Neal Cassidy - and they assumed a lifestyle largely based on sex, drugs, alcohol and fast-food, while criticising the American ethic of acquisition and work. During the last two decades Ginsberg has emerged as their major poet and Burroughs the major fiction writer. Burroughs was always more remote and private than the others and only Ginsberg, who helped edit *The Naked Lunch* (1959), and Gysin, whom Burroughs met much later in Tangier, can be said to have in any way influenced him, but not much in his subject matter, which came largely from the gangster films of his adolescence and other American writers.

As with James Joyce, one of his literary heroes, there is sharp critical division as to Burroughs' merits as a writer, even for the majority of his work which is not experimental in a mechanical

sense. Burroughs used the experience of his drug addiction, from which he was cured in 1958 before starting to write, to create a world of his own, the sub-culture of the junkie, which became his metaphor for modern life (though *Junkie: Confessions of an Undeclared Drug Addict* was published under the pseudonym of William Lee in 1953). He saw the modern world as a constant battle between those with a lust to control and exploit and those resisting them, the freedom fighters, depicted by him in various romantic guises, such as the "wild boys" in the book of that title, or fish-boys from another planet, or the young pirates of *Cities of the Red Night* (1981).

His erotic and obscene material has an obsessive character and has repelled many readers and critics. When *Dead Fingers Talk*, an amalgam of *The Naked Lunch*, *The Soft Machine* (1961) and *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962), was first published in 1963, it received such a long hostile review in the *Times Literary Supplement* that a 14-week correspondence followed, with hundreds of letters agreeing or disagreeing with the review. The correspondence ran to four pages in some issues, and was reputed to have significantly increased the circulation.

Burroughs was born in 1914 in St Louis, Missouri, and was educated at Los Alamos Ranch School in New Mexico before attending Harvard, where he graduated in English Literature in 1936. After some travel, he returned to study psychology and then took a variety of jobs which afforded him material for his future writing. These included stints as a private detective, bartender, exterminator of cockroaches, factory and office worker, advertising copywriter and newspaper reporter. In 1945 he married a woman who shared his interest in firearms, Joan Vollmer; they would shoot apples off each other's heads, and this resulted in her death in Mexico, where they had moved in 1949. He was released after three days with a homily from the judge.

Already involved in drugs,



Prophetic powers: Burroughs noticed much about life and the human condition that other people do not see

Photograph: John Minahan

Burroughs explored the South American jungle for the drug trade, and then in 1954 moved to Tangier in Morocco, where his addiction grew while he lived on remittances sent to him by his family. After four years the money ran out and he faced destitution. He took the next plane to London with the proceeds of his final cheque and put himself into the hands of Dr John Dent, who cured him with the apomorphine treatment. Moving to Paris, he started to write *The Naked Lunch*, part of which first appeared in the magazine *Big Table* - started by the editors of the *Chicago Review*, after the university had closed the magazine in horror at the proposed Burroughs issue. He then offered the manuscript to Maurice Girodias of Olympia Press who published it in 1959.

The Naked Lunch, his masterpiece, was not written in any

particular order. Sections were simply picked up from the floor or out of the drawer, put together as they came to hand and published that way. Missing sections ended up in other books. After the mid-1950s his writings received attention from publishers' editors who applied continuity and discipline to his manuscripts; thereafter his novels read more conventionally and contain fewer shocks and surprises: a little of the brightness and brilliance disappeared as a result.

In 1962 he organised a Writers Conference for the Edinburgh Festival and invited Burroughs to attend. His exposition of his cut-up method of writing, "letting words go free", was widely reported in the press and his international reputation can be dated from that occasion. Burroughs moved to London in 1965 and remained there for eight years until VAT became

such a nuisance to him that he moved first to New York and, a decade later, to Lawrence, Kansas, not too far from his birthplace, to write in a little frame house and look after a growing family of cats. He would occasionally give lectures and go on reading tours, but he preferred his work to any other activity and his life varied little wherever he lived.

Burroughs was at his best in satire. He understood his characters well and imitated them convincingly when reading in public. His favourite targets were politicians, greedy businessmen, doctors and scientists indifferent to the consequences of their human experiments, nigger-baiting white Southerners, salesmen, and those involved in the drug trade as pushers, dealers and addicts, as well as Thirties-type gangsters and the stock characters of the old West.

In essence he was an adventure novelist - sometimes appearing to be writing for very young audiences - but his narratives suddenly veer off at a tangent to get inside the private thoughts of a character or investigate a passing fantasy. Several pages later he will return to his main narrative. His use of Swifalian morality, advocating evil in order to attract attention to it, was genuine enough, but not entirely without *schadenfreude*.

His later novels build on the mythology of the earlier ones, but have a sequential story line. *Cities of the Red Night* is about a plague in the form of a rash that drives its victims to sexual frenzy before it kills them. It contains some extraordinary bizarre and picaresque episodes in what is basically a detective story with romantic and Boschian scenes. *The Place of Dead Roads* (1983),

which followed it, is but for the introduction of time travel and other preoccupations, a fairly conventional western novel. The later work does not contain the visceral humour that makes *The Naked Lunch* so memorable. Burroughs' humour surfaces mainly in his exchanges of dialogue between those planning some new outrage on unsuspecting humanity, or in the heightened caricature-like vignettes where he shows the logical consequences of some modern institutions and practices.

Burroughs' inventiveness was a cross between Swift and Sade: he created people, places and situations that get beneath our conscious critical awareness and work through our gut emotions and nerve endings. *Interzone* (1989), an imaginary country and one of his greatest creations, has all the worst features of both Communism and Capitalism which are caricatured mercilessly. He reports on the conferences of politicians or scientists in a way that reveals the total corruption and disregard for human values of those attending.

The expressionistic, exaggerated speeches ring only too true: one hears in them the smooth reassurances that the authorities give us today. His blue film sequences and frenetic orgy scenes demonstrate, through the titillation they excite in the reader, the connections between our sexual drive and our cruelty.

If *The Naked Lunch* is a cautionary tract against capital punishment as the author has often claimed, it is also a book that enables the reader to find in himself characteristics that he might never have suspected he possessed. Homosexuals are not spared either. Burroughs, homosexual himself (and the author of *Queer*, 1985), could be as wickedly cruel about gays and gay life as about corrupt politicians, mad doctors and trigger-happy sheriffs. It is not surprising that he evokes strong passions and hostility in many quarters. In all his work there is an element of science fiction and it is science fiction writers that he has perhaps most influenced. Many

of his creations are monsters or creatures from another planet, but usually satirise monstrous aspects of humans we recognise. *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962), his most experimental novel and the one in which he most developed the cut-up, fold-in technique, is also the nearest to pure science fiction.

He was often careless about grammar, syntax and spelling, partly because he followed the vernacular as used by his characters, but his style is nevertheless startlingly original and by no means naive. It was content that interested him and once he started to be published by commercial publishers he submitted without objection to commercial editing. It was the act of writing he enjoyed and he took little interest in going over old work.

His European reputation was great, especially in France and Germany. There will always be disagreement over his merits as a writer, but probably not over his importance as a seminal influence with a special and enlightening view of the world. Like Swift, he was a moralist torn between horror and gloom, whose message comes instinctively out of his perception. Burroughs noticed much about life and the human condition that other people do not see.

In his collected essays, *The Adding Machine* (1985), he expounded his theories on time, chance, magic, human motivation, sexuality and humour, often moving into fictional passages (like long asides in his novels) to illustrate the point. His gift for a telling phrase has left behind an armoury of aphorisms that help to open our eyes to the kind of the world we inhabit, and they will be increasingly quoted. Ultimately he may become one of the few writers of our time who have helped to change the world by changing our perception of it.

John Calder

William Seward Burroughs, writer, born St Louis, Missouri, February 1914; twice married; 2ndly Joan Vollmer (died 1951); one son deceased; died Lawrence, Kansas 2 August 1997.

Alec Kitson



Kitson: passionate beliefs

There is the true story of two lads, in charge of a horse and cart, clanking the cobbles and delivering the milk to the more prosperous citizens of Edinburgh Morningside in the early 1940s. Their names: Alec Kitson. 40 years later to be Chairman of the Labour Party Conference, as Deputy General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union; and one Sean Connery, by that time known the world over as James Bond or 007.

When I asked him, "Alec, whatever did happen to that horse?", he replied, "H'mm, Connery and I knew all about animal welfare, long before there was any lobby on animal rights at the Labour Party conference or anywhere else. You can take it that that horse and all our horses were extremely well cared for and lived a happy life with us. As usual, I was before my time!"

Indeed, in many matters, Kitson was before his time. The notion put around that Kitson and some of his contemporary trade union leaders were out of Jurassic Park is ludicrous and unfair. Ancient Labour may have been, but ancient Labour had values, passionate

beliefs in right and wrong, and an enormous interest in the world beyond Britain and Europe. My memory of Kitson above all others is the work that he did year in and year out for the International Committee of the Labour Party. He was a close colleague of the late Dame Judith Hart and was the driving force behind many of Hart's reforms to change the nature of aid to be focused on the poor rather than generalised.

He was a genuine champion of civil rights when liberties were suppressed. As Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party Foreign Affairs Committee in 1975-76, I accompanied him on numerous delegations to support the cause of President Salvador Allende in Chile. Those who went with him, like Ron Hayward, the General Secretary of the Labour Party, and shadow ministers such as Peter Shore, were struck by how much he knew about the detail not only of Chile but of Nicaragua and other heart-rending situations. For example, Lord Carrington, then Foreign Secretary, told me how impressed he had been with Kitson's advocacy of causes on which they disagreed. Few people in Britain had

such an intimate knowledge of the Soviet Union. Together with Jenny Little, the long-serving International Secretary of the Labour Party, Kitson built up contacts around the world hugely to the benefit of Britain, as leaders of those nations who had been befriended by him grew into power.

Kitson was born of a family involved in the transport and mining industries at Kirkcaldy in the Midlothian coalfield. Leaving school at 14, he drove a horse and cart, and as soon as he was of an age to complete a driving test, became a lorry driver. This was a reserved occupation during the Second World War. As soon as the war ended, at the young age of 24, he became a junior official with the old and proud Scottish Horse and Motormen's Union.

I first met him in 1962 when there were problems at the British Motor Corporation's truck and tractor division at Bathgate involving delivery men. Whereas other unions were a bit light-hearted about going on strike, Kitson was careful to consult his members and reflect their view that they did not wish to lose money unnecessarily. Throughout his life, Kitson was

contemptuous of futile rhetoric, especially by those who would not be disadvantaged while causing others to lose wages. Although it was inevitable that the Scottish Horse and Motormen should for their own advantage join up with the then mighty Transport and General Workers' Union, it was said at the time that the merger was all about Kitson's wider ambitions. Indeed, the rumour went that he had been promised succession to the leadership of the entire Transport and General Workers' Union itself. My enquiries suggest that no such undertaking was ever in fact given.

He became, in 1966, Chairman of the Scottish Trades Union Congress. Mick McGahey, the miners' leader, said of him, "Alec Kitson, along with Jimmy Jarvis, Bill Tweedie and Jimmy Milne, transformed the Scottish TUC. He was a fervent supporter of Scottish devolution, very much the child of that STUC." More than any other trade union leader of his generation, Kitson played a central role on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, chairing not only the International Committee, but at one time or another the then important Home Policy Committee, the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the organisational sub-committee of the party. I used to see him late at night on the Edinburgh aircraft with a huge canvas rucksack on his back full of papers. He was a dynamo, and yet on the plane was found slumped up fast asleep. The ability to cat-nap, he claimed, was one of his great strengths as a trade union leader. But his real strength was that he was an extremely skilful and constructive negotiator.

In 1977, Kitson and Moss Evans contested the General

Secretaryship of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Evans, who had represented the motor industry in the union, told me "Kitson was an exceptional good colleague and very, very loyal. I never experienced, despite all the difficulties of the late 1970s and early 1980s, any reproach from a man who had come second to me in an election."

Evans recalled that Kitson had been marvellous during the road haulage dispute which preceded the winter of discontent of 1978-79. "I only saw Kitson really angry on one occasion. That was in December 1978 when he thought that he had an agreement between the employers and the union on the critical matter of the strike of the lorry drivers in oil distribution. He came back to me absolutely livid that the agreement had been superseded, as he perceived it, by Bill Rodgers, then James Callaghan's Transport Secretary." Kitson held to the end of his life that, had he been allowed by the Government to go snap on this agreement, that the whole winter of discontent would not have occurred.

Perhaps the high peak of Kitson's career was the 1981 Labour Party conference and

the ferocious battle between Tony Benn and Denis Healey for the non-position of Deputy Leader of the Party. Despite his natural inclinations as a man of the left, Kitson was fastidiously neutral as Chairman. Kitson, with his cheerfully bossy "you get back - I called you over there" was a treat. The only fence he really gave was to the women, some of whom he called "hen" - and told one delegate that it was time she went away and made the tea. In spite of initial consternation and fury, at the end of the day upon the last Friday of conference, a group of formidable Labour ladies, led by the redoubtable Alice Mabon, now MP for Halifax, presented him with a teapot - a treasured possession.

When he retired from the Transport and General Workers at the age of 65, in 1986, Kitson became Director of the Lothian Regional Transport Board and in 1990 its Chairman. As a local MP, I know at first hand that he did a stupendous job in giving us and the city of Edinburgh one of the best transport systems in the country. Nor, on retirement, did he vegetate on national issues; for

five years he was a prominent and influential member of the War On Want council.

If the Labour Party now has a huge Commons majority, those who are the beneficiaries should never forget that it was Alec Kitson and his contemporaries, sustained by passionate beliefs as to what was right or wrong, and what was good for working people, who kept the Labour Party alive in the dark and difficult days. The loss of his wife Annie some weeks ago, deprived him of his great quality of battling.

Tam Dalyell

Alexander Harper Kitson, trade unionist, born Kirkcaldy, Midlothian 21 October 1921; General Secretary, Scottish Horse and Motormen's Union (later Commercial Motormen's Union) 1959-71; Chairman, Scottish TUC 1966, Treasurer 1974-81; Assistant General Secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union 1971-80; Deputy General Secretary 1980-86; Member of National Executive Committee, Labour Party 1980-86; Chairman of the Labour Party 1980-81; married 1942 Ann Brown McLeod (died 1997); two daughters; died Edinburgh 2 August 1997.

Fela Kuti

Fela Kuti's family circumstances marked him for distinction, though not necessarily as one of the earliest and wildest of Africa's handful of world-famous popular singers. The Ransome-Kuti family is a sort of Nigerian equivalent of the Foots or the Redgraves - intellectual, uncompromising and both of the establishment and against it at the same time.

Kuti's father and grandfather were both eminent Christian churchmen and liturgical composers, and his mother was a pioneering African feminist, the first female holder of a Nigerian driving licence, and a visitor of Mao Tse-tung in China. One of Kuti's brothers, Beko, a lawyer, is the leader of the Nigerian democratic opposition; a second, the doctor Koye, served as health minister in the 1970s; while Wole Soyinka, the Nobel Literature laureate, is a cousin.

Kuti's introduction to music began in the most conservative way, studying composition and trumpet at the Trinity College of Music in London in the late 1950s. He began to absorb jazz and black American styles - James Brown was an important influence - to add to his knowledge of Yoruba traditional music and Ghanaian and Nigerian "highlife" style. He formed his first band, the Koola Lobitos, and played trumpet backing Soyinka, who was at Leeds University and composing songs in his spare time.

In 1969 the Koola Lobitos toured the United States. Kuti immersed himself in the black power politics of Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver and the Black Panthers, then in full bloom, and before long the Koola Lobitos, who had already been rechristened Nigeria 70, became Egypt 70, a reflection of the new the-

ory that Africa was the cradle of humanity and culture, with ancient Egypt a black rival to Aryan Greece.

The classic 69 *Los Angeles Sessions* album, recorded rapidly on a shoestring before the band was deported for working without work permits, opened in characteristically discursive form with a rambling spoken introduction before settling into its trademark mix of rich brass and heavy, multi-layered percussion - the drummer Tony Allen was of vital importance to the creative process.

By the early Seventies Kuti was establishing a reputation in Lagos, and recording profitably and successfully. His musical trademark was the rich mix he christened "Afro beat", coupled with lyrics almost exclusively in either Yoruba or pidgin. His songs, always concerned with social and political issues,

begin to turn into robust criticism of the corruption and incompetence manifesting itself among African leaders as the independence dream began to turn sour.

In 1971, Kuti returned to London to record at EMI's Abbey Road studios, with production handled by the drummer Ginger Baker. Throughout the Seventies and Eighties, he solidified his reputation for musical excitement, showmanship and outspokenness. His name transmutated to the more African Fela Aniklapu-Kuti and Egypt 70 became Egypt 80. He set up a nightclub-cum-commune called the Kalakuta Republic, in which he held court over a harem of women - in a much-publicised ceremony he simultaneously married 27 of them - and raised the smoking of *ibbo* (Nigerian grass) to the status of ritual. His songwriting became

more and more pointed as he lambasted the politicians, generals and businessmen he saw despoiling and oppressing Nigeria. A torrent of colourful pidgin lyrics flowed from his pen - "Expensive Shift", "Zombie", "ITT (International Thief Thief)", generally assumed to refer to Chief Moshood Abiola, the winner of Nigeria's most recent election, and "Beats of No Nation" (on the cover of which Margaret Thatcher was depicted as one of a trio of hyenas with Ronald Reagan and P.K. Botha).

By 1988 Kuti was able to pack Brixton Academy with a coalition of not only London Nigerians and world music enthusiasts, but young Jamaicans and soul, rap and hip hop fans, transfixed by the relentless trundling percussion of a huge *oft* drum, the half-donned female singers, and the bare-chested Kuti, face painted

white, strutting back and forth in front of his minutely drilled 30-strong battalion, blowing saxophone solos and pausing for cigarettes between verses.

Kuti's political views, expounded to the press as he sprawled in underpants, joint in hand, attracted regular and violent reprisals from the Nigerian authorities. In 1977 the Kalakuta Republic was sacked by a large police raid during which Kuti's mother was pushed from a window, dying afterwards from her injuries. In 1985 Kuti served 20 months in prison on a charge (trumped up, he insisted) of illegally exporting a small sum of foreign currency. Earlier this year, the Shrine, the club which succeeded the Kalakuta Republic, received yet another major drugs squad visitation, with Kuti incarcerated for some days before be-

ing released mysteriously with no charge.

Though Kuti remained an enthusiastic provocateur till the end, he abandoned political commentary in disgust by the late Eighties, and turned instead to what he described as "spirituality" - which entailed a study of the mystical processes underlying the ways of the world. His pronouncements remained just as colourful. A much-aided recent theory, characteristically unsupported by anything as mundane as evidence, concerned the presence in Windsor Castle of a Yoruba ritual pot pilfered by the explorer Mungo Park, the vibrations from which were fuelling global misfortunes.

He leaves a large and important catalogue of records, and his son and musical heir Femi at the helm of his own band, a flourishing live version of the sound Fela Kuti created,



Kuti: enthusiastic provocateur

still unique, and still in world demand.

Philip Sweeney

Fela Ransome-Kuti, musician, born Abeokuta, Nigeria 15 October 1938; died Lagos 2 August 1997.

MARRIAGES

TREGELLAS / DRIVER: Mary Tregellas and Benedict Driver are delighted to announce that they were married on Saturday 2 August, at St Michael and All Angels Church, Pinhoe.

DEATHS

CARNELL: William John, late of Tazara and Malawi, and late of Gainsborough and Lincoln, on 30 July

Births, Marriages & Deaths

1997, in his 67th year. Much-loved husband of Betty and loving father and grandfather. Funeral service at St Peter's-in-Eastgate Church on Friday

8 August at 11am. Family flowers only, please. Donations if desired to the British Heart Foundation. Enquiries to Lincoln Co-operative Funeral Service, 12 Portland St, telephone 01522 534971.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL or telephoned on 0171-293 2012, and are charged at 66.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

The Queen Mother, 97; Mr James Arbuthnot MP, former government minister, 45; Vice-Admiral Sir Patrick Bayly, 83; Mr David Bedford, composer, 60; Mr William Cooper, novelist, 87; Dr Jack Cunningham MP, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 58; Sir Rustan Feroze, cyneologist, 77; Professor Hugh Freeman, psychiatrist, 68; Sir George Godber, former chairman, Health

Education Council, 89; Miss Georgina Hale, actress, 54; Mr Martin Jarvis, actor, 56; Mr David Lange, former prime minister of New Zealand, 55; Mr Ian Newton, former Headmaster, Bedales School, 51; Mr John Spalding, former chief executive, Halifax Building Society, 73; Mr Bowen Wells MP, 62; Sir Michael Weston, UK Permanent Representative to Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 60.

Anniversaries

Births: John Tradescant the Younger, horticulturist, 1608; Percy Bysshe Shelley, poet, 1792; Sir Harry Lauder (MacLennan), comedian, 1870; Sir Osbert Lancaster, artist and writer, 1908. Deaths: Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, killed in battle at Evesham, 1265; Hans Christian Andersen, writer, 1875; Roy Herbert Thomson, first Baron Thomson of Fleet, newspaper publisher, 1976. On

this day: Lord Wantage founded the British Red Cross Society, 1870; Britain declared war on Germany, 1914; Trebitsch Lincoln, former British MP, was arrested for forgery in New York, 1915; the second battle of the Marne ended, 1918; Kenya, the Sudan and British Somaliland were invaded by Italy, 1940. Today is the Feast Day of St Ia, St John-Baptist Vianney, St Molua or Lughaidh, St Sezni.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, President, Royal Yachting Association, attends a Council Meeting at Trinity House, Lightship Service: Engineering Directorate, Sea Coves, Isle of Wight.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am; band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

25

Also on the cards for next week is Zeneca, which is pencilled in for pre-tax profits of between £640m and £670m, by contrast with £611m a year earlier. Meanwhile, the market anticipates pre-tax operating profit of between £425m and £468m from Prudential against £421m last time. Commercial Union is likely to report pre-tax operating profit of £215m to £235m against £216m last year.

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business & city

FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEAR

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
DEPUTY BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISON

'Jobs upheaval ahead' when knowledge workers take over

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Financial institutions face a massive shift in employment over the next two years with 125,000 managers and clerical workers expected to lose their jobs, with the City of London the main beneficiary of a 113,000 increase in jobs for "knowledge workers".

A new report backed by the large financial institutions predicts that while backroom staff are highly vulnerable to cut-backs, there will be fresh op-

portunities for treasury, investment and information technology specialists.

Professor Amin Rajan, author of the study, *Tomorrow's People*, argues that to survive in an era of relentless competition, employees will be expected to think and behave as if they were self-employed. Staff will have to treat employers as a "customer" for their services, he believes.

Based on his investigation of trends in 350 organisations, Professor Rajan says the new jobs will go to those with higher

education, "networking" skills, entrepreneurial flair and fearlessness. The losers will be those in routine back office jobs, especially those who do not have skills to enable re-employment within the firm. This is likely to mean nearly a third of the workforce in banks, building societies and insurance companies all over Britain being made redundant.

They may not be able to relocate to out-of-town "call centres" which are increasingly drawing work away from back offices in urban areas.

For such people, employers have not delivered the quid pro quo of flexible working - training in transferable skills so that staff are employable elsewhere.

Professor Rajan, however, believes that many employees lack the necessary foundation on which to base further training. "They are the victims of an education system which puts undue emphasis on knowledge and understanding, to the detriment of personal attributes such as resilience, initiative and judgement."

"Those who have these at-

tributes are thriving as evidenced by ever-widening differentials. Those who don't, fall by the wayside. This is the Achilles' heel of the new flexibility," says Professor Rajan, visiting professor at City University Business School.

The report, published by the London Human Resource Group and Focus Central London, a training and enterprise council, forecasts worsening shortages of knowledge workers, especially in the City where firms prefer to hire those who have already been trained.

The 95-page document argues that organisations in the sector are going through a period of "lean production" in which management has been de-layered and where the degree of labour flexibility is at a "medium" level.

After the turn of the century it contends there will be a period of "agile production" in which companies form alliances with suppliers and where labour flexibility will be high. It will be an era of "virtual" companies in which organisations will be stripped to the bone. Apart

from their "core competences", other services will be bought in. Professor Rajan doubts whether organisations have prepared employees for lean production. The new method needs to be communicated and justified.

"It has created a climate of fear in which enterprise and initiative are held back. Risk-aversion is rife."

There should also be a publicly provided career counselling system for adults.

"In some, creating a new mode of production is one thing. Achieving staff effectiveness in it is quite another. Their hopes, fears and aspirations need to be taken into account. Too much is expected of them by the unforgiving marketplace."

'Tomorrow's People', published by Create, 2 Holly Hill, Vauxhall Lane, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, TN11 0XD

Telewest in early talks with NTL

Cathy Newman

NTL, the US cable company, is trying to kick-start further consolidation in the flagging UK cable industry by holding informal talks with Telewest Communications about a merger.

Industry sources say NTL hopes to create a rival to the biggest cable company, Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC), which was formed from a £4.5bn four-way merger in April.

The approach to Telewest, which is being spearheaded by NTL's head, Barclay Knapp, is at a very early stage. But both of the companies involved acknowledge that further consolidation is vital to revive the cable industry's fortunes.

This is the second time in two months that Telewest has been the subject of merger speculation.

At the end of June, the company was forced to play down comments by Telewest's chairman, Fred Vierra, that he could not rule out a merger with CWC.

Sources said United News & Media was keen to get involved with Mr Knapp's plans, although no one at United was available for comment yesterday. United already has a business relationship with NTL through its link-up with S4C - the Welsh Channel 4 - to provide services for the last remaining digital terrestrial licence.

The pair joined forces to bid for the licence, which carries the S4C and Channel 5 digital services but has half its capacity spare for new programming, after losing out to British Digital Broadcasting in the battle to win the three key digital terrestrial licences.

A spokesman for Telewest said last night: "We never comment on market rumours."

A spokeswoman for NTL reiterated that sentiment, but added: "We've made it very clear there will be further consolidation and in time there will be three or four big cable companies."

NTL has previously been the odd man out in the cable industry, going it alone where other companies have co-operated.

Telewest and CWC jointly ordered set-top boxes from General Instrument for the launch of digital cable television, but NTL was not involved.

The cable companies have been under pressure to provide a more unified front to improve the uptake of cable television services.

At the last count, Telewest had built 66 per cent of its network, and had passed 2.6 million homes, but only 550,000 of those took cable television.

Around 720,000 homes used Telewest's telephone service, while roughly 430,000 subscribed to both television and telecoms services.

Shareholders fear weak Hampel report

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

The Government will come under severe pressure to toughen up rules on corporate governance if the Hampel report, due to be published tomorrow, pulls its punches on key aspects of companies' responsibilities to their shareholders.

One leading corporate governance consultancy says ministers would be duty-bound to take further steps if the Hampel Committee, the successor to the Cadbury and Greenbury committees, failed to propose specific new guidelines.

Its forthcoming report is expected to disappoint shareholder groups by taking a general approach to issues such as requiring institutions to declare voting policies, reviewing the role of non-executive directors and introducing a shareholder vote on directors' pay.

Anne Simpson, joint managing director of Pirc, the corporate governance consultancy, says the Government's decision is likely to depend on the reaction to the Hampel proposals.

"If Hampel gets a resounding round of applause and people feel it has taken on the major issues then the Government will feel it is not worth re-inventing the wheel. But if it doesn't, then it would be an abdication of responsibility if the

Government did not come forward," she said.

The Government has already pledged to set up another committee of experts to consider corporate governance. But it is thought to favour self-regulation over new legislation.

Corporate governance specialists are concerned that the Hampel Committee seems ready to draw a line under the more specific proposals of the Cadbury and Greenbury committees and adopt a more general, flexible approach.

Some even expect a watering-down of some of the Cadbury principles and an easing of the burden on smaller and medium-sized companies.

Sir Ronnie Hampel, the ICI chairman who heads the committee, has already said he has no desire to produce "an earth-shattering report". Ms Simpson says: "I hope I am going to be pleasantly surprised."

Pirc wants City institutions to be required to publish their voting policies and for them to have a duty to vote.

It also wants pension fund trustees and individual fund members to have the right to ask institutions how they voted on particular issues. It is keen for small and medium-sized business to be included in all the proposals so that a "level playing field" exists.

The consultancy is particularly

concerned about reports that the Hampel Committee will relax the regulatory burden on smaller companies.

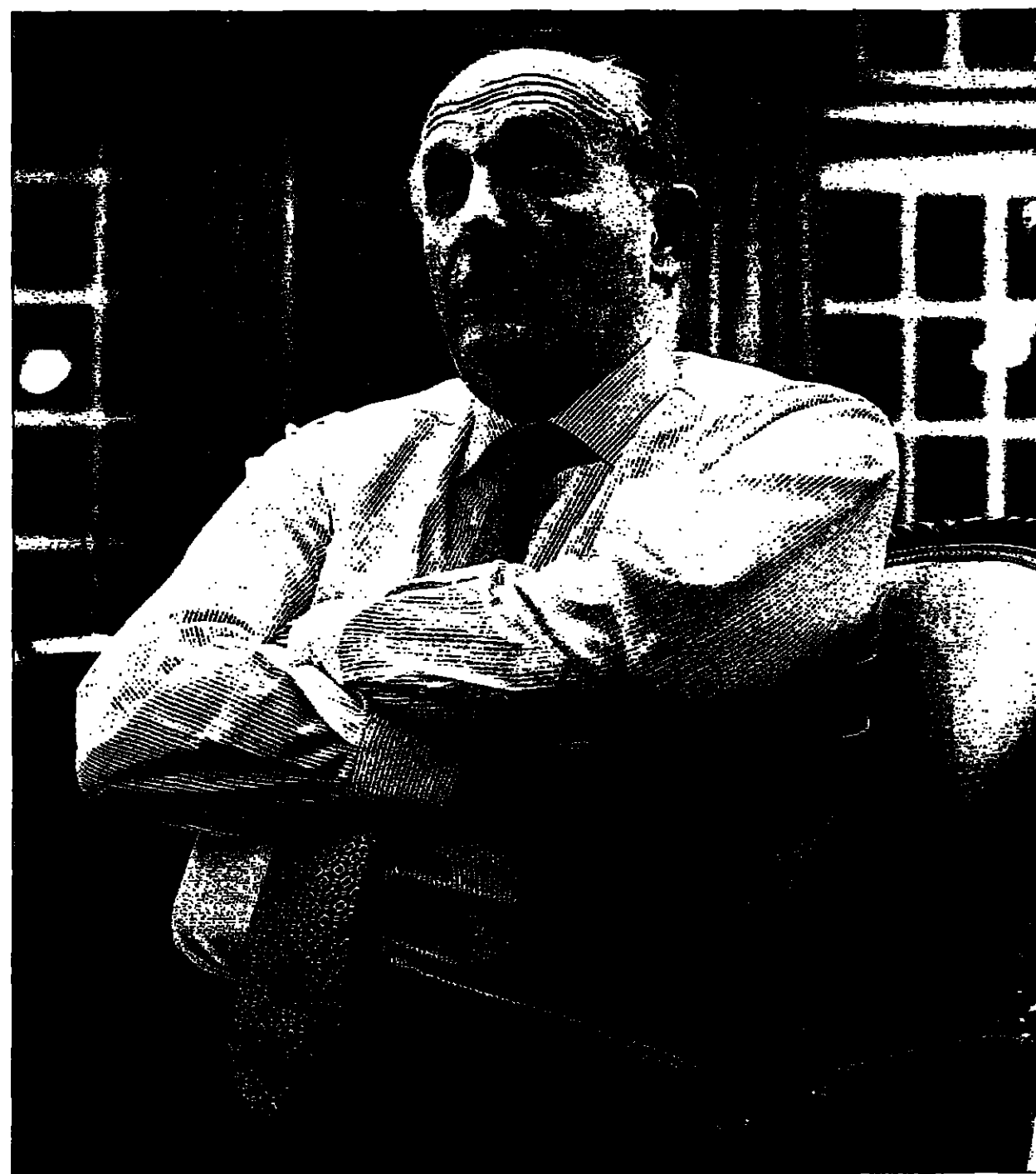
Ms Simpson said: "The issue of corporate governance is more important for smaller companies. If they are growing rapidly they will benefit from the experience of non-executive directors."

Pirc is concerned that some medium-sized public companies do not have any non-executives.

In its submission to the Hampel Committee it argued that, with smaller quoted companies, "Investors are faced with relative illiquidity, a paucity of analyst and media attention and perhaps founder shareholders and directors which weights the Government's balance in favour of the internal players."

Some corporate governance specialists have argued that if the requirements on smaller companies are eased, then their market valuations could suffer as investors would perceive them to be a higher risk.

The Hampel Committee was set up last year as the successor body to the Cadbury Committee on corporate governance, which reported in 1992 and the Greenbury Committee, which was prompted by rows of executive pay, whose report was published in 1995.



Sir Ronnie Hampel: His report on corporate governance, due tomorrow, is expected to be disappointing

Economists warn of higher rates as multi-billion windfall spree benefits car makers, holiday firms - and dentists

Spend, spend, spend to trigger increases

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The consumer spending spree, fuelled by free shares from building societies converting into banks, could keep up the pressure for the Bank of England to raise interest rates well into the second half of this year, according to economists.

The warnings come days before the Bank's monetary policy committee is thought likely to increase the cost of borrowing by another quarter-point to 7 per cent. It meets on Wednesday and Thursday.

New calculations by David Walton at Goldman Sachs suggest that the consumer windfalls could have added up to £2bn to spending during the first half of this year. "This suggests there is plenty of scope for retail sales to receive a further substantial boost during the second half of the year," he writes.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that spending on items such as foreign holidays and cars - neither included in the official retail sales figures - has soared since June.

Another expert warned yesterday that interest rates should rise to 8 per cent to avoid an inflationary boom, despite the punitive impact that would have on exporters.

Chris Wright, economics director of Barclays Bank, said: "On balance, the best chance of avoiding a more volatile growth and inflation cycle still seems to be to raise rates further."

So far this year the flotations on the stock market of Alliance & Leicester, Halifax, Woolwich and Norwich Union have given millions of people free shares worth £22bn in total. More than a fifth were sold immediately.

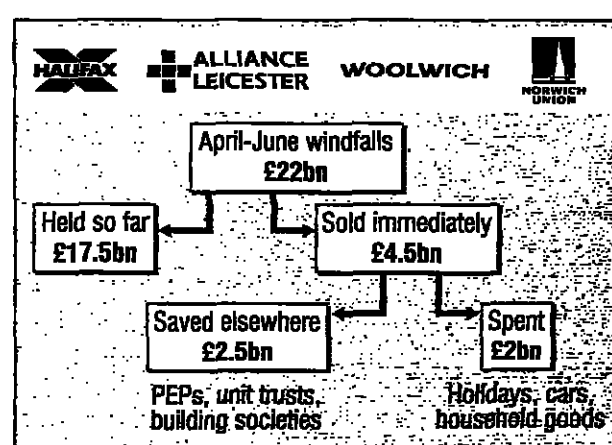
It is impossible to be certain where this £4.5bn has gone. But,

comparing retail sales in the first half of this year to the level that would have been expected given rising incomes and falling unemployment, Mr Walton estimates that the extra boost has amounted to £800m.

With retail sales accounting for only 40 per cent of consumer spending, this implies a £2bn boost to the total from the share windfalls so far.

The rest will have been put into other forms of saving. The Building Societies Association reported the biggest monthly inflow of deposits since 1986 during June, and suggested this was caused by carpenters looking for the next society to convert. The inflow amounted to £1.8bn in June compared with £878m in May.

Sales of PEPs and unit trusts also roared ahead, although the main high street banks reported that retail deposits in June rose by slightly less than



the recent monthly average of £2.1bn.

A survey conducted for the British Retail Consortium suggested that eventually about a third of the bonanza shares, expected to add up to £35bn by the end of 1997, would be sold.

Mr Walton estimates that if half of this amount were spent, and the rest saved, the direct boost to consumer spending would be £5.5bn.

There could be an additional indirect effect from reductions in other forms of savings as a result of holding the new shares. According to the BRC survey,

people are most likely to spend windfall money on holidays (33 per cent), new kitchens, bathrooms and home improvements (20 per cent), household goods such as carpets and furniture (17 per cent) and cars (11 per cent).

In addition, more than one in eight said that they would use windfall receipts to pay off other debts.

The second quarter of the year brought a sharp increase in the proportion of borrowers up to date with their payments on credit agreements, according to Equifax, the credit scoring agency.

Arthur Daleys gain from the domino effect

Hundreds of Arthur Daleys parading their wares on used car lots could be the biggest winners from building society windfalls, according to industry analysts who point to a domino effect feeding through to new car showrooms, writes Chris Godsmark.

Car dealers are predicting record sales in this month's R-registration bonanza of more than half a million, but most are cautious about pinning it on building society windfalls. Lex, one of the biggest dealer groups, said the greatest impact was on the used market, with bonus winners buying newer, more expensive, second-hand cars.

The impact is thought to be one reason behind a steady rise in used car prices, though another, much longer-term contributor is that the cars are better put together and last longer. Because used prices generally are going up, some people trading in their old cars have been tempted to buy new ones for the first time.

Even without the windfall effect, the general boost in consumer confidence means new car sales are likely to match or beat the peak of 500,112 August registrations at the top of the last boom in 1989. August last year was disappointing for the industry, with 479,000 P-registrations sales.

But windfall winners hoping to walk into dealers this week and order an R-registered car could be disappointed. Stocks of Audi, BMWs and even more mundane models have already been snapped up.

Exotic and expensive locations in demand

Holiday companies have seen an increase in demand since the windfall money started to flood into the economy with travel agencies detecting a trend to more exotic, expensive locations, writes Nigel Cope.

Airtours, Britain's second-largest tour operator, said bookings for August holidays had been strong even though the company had increased prices by £20 across the board.

Tim Byrne, deputy group finance director, said: "We've also seen a very high pick-up in summer 1998 bookings, though whether we can link that to the windfalls, I don't know."

Long-haul holidays, to the Caribbean in particular, were selling well. "People are trading up," he added.

Official figures show the price

of package holidays increased 5 per cent overall in June. First Choice confirmed a strong level of bookings but was more cautious about the windfall factor. "Many had pre-booked anyway so it is difficult to judge the windfall impact. But we are seeing people who've had a summer holiday asking themselves whether to take a winter holiday as well," the company said.

Separately, it seems there is a surprise beneficiary of the Woolwich and Halifax factor - dentists. Mr Byrne says a dentist friend is snowed under with patients looking for bridge work to be done.

"They tell him it's not the sort of thing they could normally spend that amount on. But as it is 'money for nothing' they are booking themselves in."

STOCK MARKETS						
FTSE 100						
Index	Close	Week's Chg	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	YTD (%)
FTSE 100	4899.30	+47.8	+1.0	4964.20	4056.60	3.34
FTSE 250	4488.40	+13.7	+0.3	4729.40	4386.20	3.69
FTSE 350	2348.50	+20.0	+0.9	2373.70	2017.90	3.40
FTSE SmallCap	2188.73	+2.9	+0.1	2374.20	2178.29	3.25
FTSE All-Share	2291.97	+18.4	+0.8	2316.03	1989.78	3.39
New York	8194.04	+80.6	+1.0	8254.89	5032.84	1.60
Tokyo	19804.38	-585.2	-2.9	20681.07	17303.86	0.781
Hong Kong	18379.22	+721.1	+4.0	18379.22	12065.17	2.731
Frankfurt	4408.79	+91.1	+2.1	4438.93	2848.77	1.251

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES						
UK interest rates						
Bank of England base rate (0-25 year base rate)						
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (2)	Year Ago	Long Term (10)	10 Year Ago
UK	6.97	7.5	7.02	7.96	7.05	7.96
US	5.56	5.91	6.18	6.60	6.42	6.84
Japan	0.5	0.66	2.11	3.33	-	-
Germany	3.09	3.47	5.61	6.34	6.30	-
Bond Yields *						
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (2)	Year Ago	Long Term (10)	10 Year Ago
Gilt 2 1/2	219.4	25	12.9	152.4	21	12.1
10Yr	1580	175	12.5	1180	14.5	8.4
Lloyds TSB Gp	736	76.5	11.6	542	48	8.1

CURRENCIES

£/\$

£/DM

Pound vs.

	Close	Week's Chg	Yr Ago
\$ (London)	1.8370	-2.61c	1.8572
\$ (NY)	1.6315	-3.25c	1.6525
DM (London)	3.0394	-1.97c	2.7946
¥ (London)	193.256	+1.178	168.234
£ Index	105.3	-0.9	84.7

Dollar vs.

	Close	Week's Chg	Yr Ago
£ (London)	0.6109	+1.03	0.6422
\$ (NY)	0.6129	+1.19	0.6423
DM (London)	1.8567	+1.95c	1.4736
¥ (London)	118.056	+1.285	106.756
\$ Index	106.0	+0.8	86.6

OTHER INDICATORS							
	Close	Week's Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Tr Chg	Yr Ago	Month Chg
Oil Brent \$	19.08	-0.06	19.40	RM	157.5	+2.9c	153.0 12.4%
Gold \$	324.16	-1.3	385.50	GOPE	112.8	+3.4c	109.1 21.4%
Gold £	197.95	-0.73	248.20	Base Index	67.9c	-	5.75 -

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news

Labour of love that made wild daffodils dance again in poet's Lakeland

Esther Leach

The words of William Wordsworth fall easily from the lips of George Kirkby as he strolls through the garden of the poet's first family home.

He brushes past the lush greenery behind Dove Cottage at Grasmere on to the terrace where Wordsworth paced up and down as he worked.

"The spot commands a view over the roof of our house, of the lake, the church, the crag and two-thirds of the vale" quotes Mr Kirkby from a letter that Wordsworth wrote to Samuel Coleridge.

Mr Kirkby's intimate knowledge of verses, letters and journals has enabled him to recreate the quarter-acre garden as the Wordsworth family knew it during the eight years they lived in the Lakeland cottage at the beginning of the 19th century.

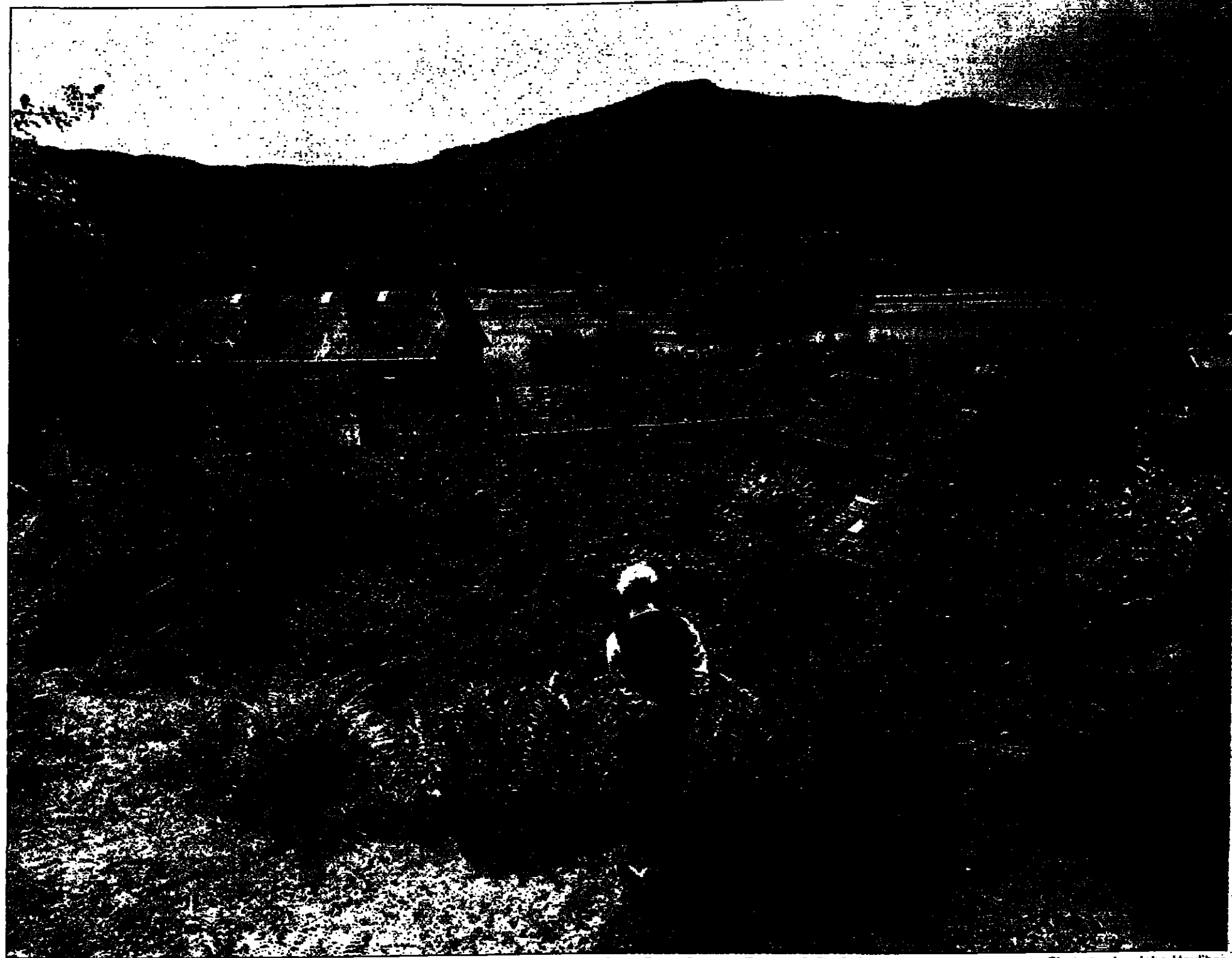
It has taken 25 years but, says Mr Kirkby, his work on Words-

worth's "domestic slip of hill" is as close to being finished as it ever will be.

"Wordsworth would recognise this garden if he were to walk into it now. There will always be something to do, something to add, but I feel I have finally captured the spirit of Wordsworth's garden."

When Mr Kirkby first arrived to work as a guide at the cottage, which is owned by the Wordsworth Trust, it was almost stripped of anything the family had known. "It was well kept of course but manicured rather than natural and had thousands of daffodils, the hybrid kind with big heads which would never have been here in Wordsworth's time. We do have some daffodils, just a few wild ones, which are found locally," says Mr Kirkby.

"Wordsworth had very definite views as a gardener. They are not everybody's idea - too wild for some tastes - but I'm



Domestic slip of a hill: George Kirkby surveying the scene from the terrace garden above Dove Cottage (bottom left of picture)

Photographs: John Houlihan

glad to say more people are coming round to his way of thinking.

"He felt nature could not be improved upon. Things had their place, and exotic plants and trees did not belong within an English cottage garden.

"Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy collected indigenous plants and shrubs from the fells and lakeside. Some might be considered weeds by others. I don't think that's something we would encourage today. We have grown the various plants

ourselves from seed or cuttings, sometimes travelling as far as Norfolk to find them."

Dorothy's journals are an almost perfect record of what she collected and planted. She went to a blind man in the village for a plant called London Pride, took up orchids from the lakeside, and gathered wild thyme and columbine from the fells above the house.

She was fascinated by white foxglove and made a special trip rowing across the lake to Loughrigg Fell where she gathered seeds to plant.

Much of the Wordsworths' lives centred around the garden and much of Wordsworth's poetry reflects its importance, says Mr Kirkby.

The poem devoted to his garden is Wordsworth's *A Farewell* commemorating his departure to meet Mary Hutchinson, whom he married in October 1802. Immediately on their return they "went by candlelight into the garden and were astonished at the growth of Brooms, Portugal Laurels".

The garden was a place where Wordsworth loved to observe and then write about nature as in his poems *The Green Linnet* and *To A Butterfly*. He also wrote *To The Small Celandine*, which his sister said was his favourite flower.

Mr Kirkby adds: "Wordsworth felt strongly that houses should harmonise with the surrounding landscape, and he covered the harshness of the whitewash of Dove Cottage by growing roses, honeysuckle and training runner beans up the walls."

"I've grown runner beans on the cottage walls and it looks wonderful. Sometimes I can't wait for the roses to die back to make way for the beans."

When the Wordsworth left Dove Cottage it was occupied by Thomas de Quincy who destroyed the moss huts in which the poet spent many hours, as well as the trees and plants - an incident which led to a breakdown in the relationship between the two families.

It was soon time for Mr Kirkby to return to his own garden at a cottage across the way, and he offers a last snippet of information "It's a little known fact but Wordsworth had a name for the watering can. He called it *Kubla Khan*, after the title of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*."

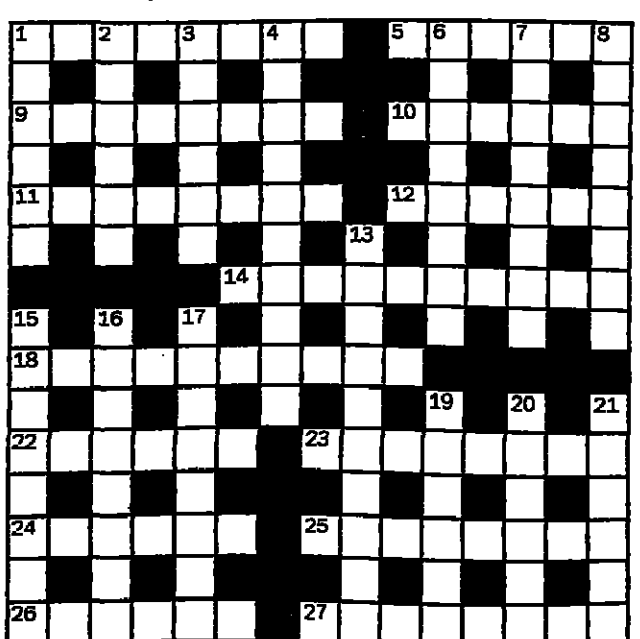


Spirit of the age: 'Wordsworth would recognise this garden if he were to walk into it now,' George Kirkby says

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3368, Monday 4 August

By Porcia



- 25 Official upset with man (8)
26 Might edge towards chaos (6)
27 Points to information on the German produce (8)

DOWN

- 1 Covering note's about wrong key (6)
2 Time of great importance? (6)
3 Touched to be give a title (6)
4 We'd praise broadcast by director general (10)
6 Are put out about discovering a hole (8)
7 Faint particule's exposed (5,3)
8 Freedom of lecturer's position reduced by time (8)
13 Opportunity comes after working now and then (2,8)
15 True, Pam's struggling against the current (8)
16 Joint approach keeps number in the city (8)
17 Refusal to be pessimistic (8)
19 The Northern edition of paper (6)
20 A navy character putting out false rumour (6)
21 Guy's hesitation about condition of animal (6)

ACROSS

- 1 Decline to express disappointment (4,4)
5 Stern reprimand frightened leader off (6)
9 VIP's certain to be on committee (8)
10 English priest in hurry to reach exit (6)
11 Rubbish a form of verse (8)
12 Announce a check on witness (6)
14 British occupying force about to win over another (5,5)
18 Origin of a name lies in French region (10)
22 Saw inside through a metre panel (6)
23 Friend with ideas for recycling fence (8)
24 Involve militia in column's retreat (6)

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